

THE  
CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

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NO. IV.

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C  
CONTAINING

NINE DISCOURSES

ON

RELATIVE DUTIES.

AND

*REASONS*

FOR BELIEVING THE TRUTH OF

DIVINE REVELATION.

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**ERRATUM.**—In the hurry of printing the present number an error took place in the paging; but the usual number of pages is notwithstanding given.

## NOTICE

OF THE PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

THROUGH the goodness of God we are enabled to offer to its patrons and friends the fourth number of the Christian Monitor. It consists principally of discourses on duties, which arise from connexions in domestick life. Some of them were never before published; and the rest, probably, will be as new as the first to the generality of our readers. The fourth, fifth, and sixth are from the sermons of Francklin, and the two last from those of Riddoch. We have thus partly composed the second volume, as well as the first, of the labours of others, both because variety is here pleasant and useful, and for the sake also of displaying the liberality of our design. Of novelty we are unambitious. If we can do good, our end is attained. Our society was instituted not so much to create as to diffuse,



It is the object of our efforts to bring together sound theology, serious monitions, and useful instruction on the duties of religion, and to present to the publick, in a cheap and portable form, valuable sermons and tracts, which perhaps would otherwise be inaccessible to the busy classes of the community. This purpose, which we have already begun to effect, we hope still more successfully to pursue.

The prayers are composed with a view to compress the substance of the discourse into a small compass, as well as to habituate the christian reader to look to God for salutary impressions after hearing or reading theological lectures.

The hymns are inserted to remind us of the duty of praise as well as of prayer; and in another form to exercise the heart on the same subject. They are mostly too well known to need a reference to their authors.

That we might still employ without fatiguing the attention of persons on our great and favourite concern, we have variegated the appearance of our pages, by adding to our tracts



on the social virtues, a number of illustrations of sacred texts, which were occasionally handled at the Thursday Lecture. They are part of a series of papers, which has already appeared in some of our literary journals. Besides contributing a mite toward confirming the faith of the christian, and awakening the fears of the unbeliever, they may serve as hints, or specimens, of the ease with which an argument may be deduced, from subjects casually discussed, for the divinity of our religion.

We take this opportunity of expressing thanks to subscribers for the encouragement which the work has received ; to our brethren in the ministry, who have kindly charged themselves with the care of subscription papers, and taken the trouble of distributing numbers ; and also to other gentlemen, who have consented to be agents in promoting our pious and charitable views.

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of sacred texts, which were occasionally  
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of a series of papers, which has already ap-  
peared in some of our literary journals. It is  
convenient, I think, to have a volume containing the  
lectures on the social virtues, and containing the lectures  
on the sacred texts, they may not be as fine, or  
as interesting as the case books which an argu-  
ment may be drawn from subjects closely  
connected with the history of our religion.

It is also this opportunity of expressing  
the views of the Society for the improvement  
of which the work has been done; to our brethren  
of other denominations, who have kindly charged  
some of our members with the care of substituting pa-  
pers, and others the number of distributing  
members; and also to other gentlemen, who  
have consented to be agents in promoting our  
cause, and obtaining views of the  
state of the world in regard to religion.  
The good reasons which they are in the  
habit of giving to others, not only in  
their own minds, but also in the  
minds of others, that they may teach the young

## DISCOURSE I.

### ON THE DUTIES OF AGED MEN.

TITUS ii. 1, 2.

*Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine :  
that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate,  
sound in faith, in charity, in patience.*

‘**SPEAK** thou the things which become sound doctrine.’ Our curiosity immediately awakes to see the things, which merit this honourable name. We keep close to the apostle’s words, and find him continue to say, ‘That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things ; that they may teach the young



women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.' Next to the young women the young men are admonished of their duty ; and next to these the servants. All conditions of people are afterwards taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly ; and then the chapter concludes with a charge to Titus to speak and exhort these things.

Thus, by attending to the declarations of plain scripture, we are convinced, that sound doctrine consists in teaching to persons those duties, which are suited to their sex, age, and station in society. Every minister of Christ, it is to be hoped, would wish to preach sound doctrine. Let him therefore be instructed by that servant of Jesus, whose directions have now been rehearsed : for what Paul delivered to Titus, as the rule of his discourses, is now committed to every christian ambassador. So that the sound and faithful preacher of the present day will adapt his sermons to the cases of his respective hearers. To the aged men he will recommend gravity ; to the aged women an holy behaviour ; to the young he will explain and



enforce the duties of discretion, fidelity, and maternal love ; and young men he will exhort to cultivate a sober life and a manly piety. He will teach servants diligence and honesty, and children obedience. He will recommend righteousness to rulers, and submission to the ruled ; and on all ranks and ages he will inculcate those religious habits, which are the indispensable qualifications of future happiness.

Conformably, wherefore, to apostolick advice, it is my intention, in the following discourses, to ' teach the things which become sound doctrine.' In other words, I would explain the nature, disclose the obligations, and enforce the practice of the relative duties. And because you, my fathers, are mentioned first by the apostle, you first are entitled to the words of exhortation. Receive them, I entreat you, in the spirit of meekness. I use not the language of reproof, but of gentle admonition and encouragement. Being elders, I dare not accuse you ; but as long as you have infirmities to sustain, and duties to fulfil, I am sure, you will grant me the privilege of a christian monitor.

I. The first thing, of which the apostle directs me to remind you, is sobriety. ' That

the aged men be sober.' There is a mental, as well as bodily sobriety, and that is the kind of sobriety, to which I now ask your attention. Sobriety of mind consists in humility and condescension, in affability and gentleness. It intends a readiness to listen to the voice of reason and the language of argument. It implies love of truth, a willingness to be convicted of error, and a desire of improvement. If you are men of sober minds, you like nothing better, than to have your misapprehensions rectified, and your mistakes corrected. You tell us, that you live to be wiser every day. It is the constant wish of your hearts daily to cure yourselves of some one fault, and acquire some one good disposition; to get quit of a portion of your ignorance, and add something to your stock of knowledge. It is indeed prophesied of you, and promised to you, as the reward of your early piety, that you 'shall still bring forth fruit in old age; you shall be fat and flourishing.' But this promise of aged fruitfulness is made on the condition that, with meekness and candour, you lay open your minds to divine cultivation. When therefore your mistakes in judgment or practice are exposed, dismiss that positive temper, which is apt to grow with length of days, and acknowledge

and follow the truth with the docility of children. It never can be too late to renounce opinions of the head, when they shall be manifestly wrong, and dispositions of the heart, when they shall be proved to be unchristian. Instead of indulging to that deafness of ears, which will not hearken to reason, to that dimness of eyes which refuses to see the truth, and to that impatience which excludes the hope of improvement, consider yourselves still candidates for conviction. Instead of giving way to a pertinacity of will, of which you are sometimes accused, be still inquisitive for more light, direction, and knowledge: be still desirous of new and better motives, guides, and supports to the discharge of your duties. Sleep not, as though you had already attained perfection; but watch, be vigilant, and sober. It is your glory to relinquish rather than to maintain your errors; and the display of meekness and modesty, those genuine marks of a christian spirit, will prove to the world, that you are as much better, as you are older, than the rest of its inhabitants.

2. What next solicits your attention is a grave demeanour. 'That the aged men be grave.' This part of your duty, my respect-



ed brethren, relates solely to your manners ; but it is not therefore a matter of trivial importance. The manners have an influence over the heart, as well as the heart over the manners. Hence a view to the soundness of your moral state, is a sufficient reason for your observing a circumspect and grave demeanour. There are also other motives to this branch of your duty. You value the respect of your fellow men ; you value your influence on their manners ; you value your power of promoting the gospel of our salvation.

Without gravity of manners you will not probably secure that degree of respect in the community, which your age and station might otherwise command. Mankind ever will pay homage to appearance. The appearance of discretion and virtue, where no other rule of judgment can be found, obtains nearly the same reverence, as discretion and virtue, where they are known to exist. With a grave exterior we naturally associate the idea of wisdom, which is unalterably venerable. We are accordingly pleased with a degree of gravity, even in childhood ; we wish it in youth ; we expect it in manhood ; but in age it is an indispensable requisite. If we find it not here, we suffer disappointment, and you the loss of a



portion of our esteem. If instead of seriousness we behold levity ; if instead of pious and profitable conversation, we hear you expending your breath in foolish jesting ; and if in place of those sober habits, which it were supposeable would be the unaffected attendants of age, we should observe an airy thoughtlessness of carriage, and a continued hankering for the gaities of the young ; in this case, you would excite the pity, not the reverence, of mankind ; and not even your hoary hairs would save you from the contempt of the wise.

Mankind, however, are not universally wise. Many there are, who, though they could not respect persons at once old in years and juvenile in manners, yet would be far from viewing your levity with displeasure. Some, it is to be feared, would be glad of your example to countenance their frivolity.

Consider, moreover, the interest of our common gospel. Will not christianity be wounded, will it not be exposed to derision, if you, its veteran supporters, are as volatile in your amusements, and as giddy in your manners, as the young, the skeptical, and irreligious ?

3. The third duty, in order, recommended to you in the text, is temperance. That

the aged men be temperate.' Temperance is one capital branch of all religion. The scriptures consider it sometimes as the whole of that duty which we owe to ourselves. It is that living soberly, which the same apostle mentions in a celebrated passage of our context, in which he sums up the whole duty of man. This living soberly, or temperately, consists in maintaining a due subjection over the body; in bringing the animal appetites under the sway of reason; in observing the laws of moderation in the whole of our conduct; in doing nothing, in short, which shall disqualify the corporeal frame for being the habitation of the soul, and the temple of the living God. Opposites to all these properties of temperance are gluttony, drunkenness, and debauchery. These vices, beastly and abominable in all men, are especially criminal in you. To behold you, on the brink of the grave, indulging to the irregularities of a carnal life, banishing the thoughts of death by debasing amusements, or quenching the few remaining sparks of reason with the intoxicating draught, is a sight too monstrous to be endured. Think not, my brethren, we wish to deaden your sensibilities, or to deprive you of a single drop of the real cordials of human life.

We know that your declining vigour demands the nurse of generous attention. When the blood, tired as now with long circulations, moves tardily in your veins, you are allowed to quicken its movements by the exhilarating glass. If Timothy, in the prime of manhood, was directed by Paul to the use of a little wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities, you, whose age and infirmities are greater, will not doubt of being tolerated in the same indulgence. Your religion is not at war with your love of life and your care to preserve it. Why should the king's sons be sad, and go mourning all their days, until they bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave? Go your way, children of the Most High, and, so using the world as not abusing it, eat your bread with cheerfulness, and drink your wine with a merry heart. Recollect, however, that you are a spectacle to the rising and risen generations. What would be tolerable in them would be levity in you. They view you as more immediately bound to the invisible world, and as in the act of embarking for a country, 'into which nothing entereth that defileth,' and whose pleasures are entirely those of intellect and devotion.



abouted 'The aged men' must, fourthly, 'be sound in faith;' that is, firm in the belief of God's existence and perfections, and steadfast in the doctrines of natural and revealed religion. The term *faith*, in the scriptures, is variously used. It sometimes signifies the truth and faithfulness of God; sometimes the whole gospel of Christ; sometimes the entire duty of a christian; and sometimes a general acceptance and profession. The most natural, and perhaps the most common, signification of faith is confidence in God. This is its meaning in the eleventh of Hebrews, and thus is it used in the passage before us. It 'is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' It is a firm persuasion in the mind that God has promised good things to good men, and that he will accomplish his promises. This faith it was, that made Abraham look for a city, of which God is emphatically the builder. This faith it was, which moved the other patriarchs to confess themselves strangers on the earth, and to declare plainly, that they sought an heavenly country. It was this faith, which influenced Moses to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to endure the pleasures of sin for a season; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward,



and endured as seeing him who is invisible. It was finally by this faith, that the martyrs, in every age of the church, have sustained almost all kinds and degrees of affliction, rather than forfeit their integrity. Now therefore, my brethren, let the same soundness of faith be in you which was in them. Let not your belief in the divine promises decline with your declining years. Strengthen in your minds every principle of faith in God, and also in Christ, which through grace given to you, still remains ; but which through your bodily decay may be ready to die. Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. Make use of all the means which a merciful God provides for bringing home perpetually to your bosoms this consolatory truth, that there are in reversion things which eye has not seen, ear has not heard, heart has not conceived ; blessings ineffably glorious, which the faithful in Christ Jesus will hereafter possess. Let your expectation of these things overcome the world, withdraw you into places of retirement and prayer, and detach you from a love of temporal vanities, wealth, and power, before death, shall utterly spoil you of these perishable possessions.

5. The apostle would have me recommend to you, after soundness in faith, soundness in charity. It was proper in Paul, the aged, to charge his son Titus to exhort other aged men to the display of this virtue. The apostle was aware, that long intercourse with the world tends to harden the features of the soul. He knew, and you know, my brethren, that the prejudices and attachments, which we form in early life, are apt to become obstinate as we advance in years ; and that, as we see with different eyes and hear with different ears, from those with which we formerly saw and heard, so we are likely to be less charitable toward those, who do not think and act in concord with ourselves. This consideration should not be forgotten by the young, when they discern in their seniors a want of charity. But you have too long, my brethren, been acquainted with the spirit of your religion, and have too great a regard for this monition of the apostle, to give the world occasion to excuse your uncharitableness. The Master whom you long have followed teaches you to love and forgive all men ; to interpret their doubtful actions favourably ; to lament their failings, and cover them with the mantle of candour ; to rejoice in every instance of

generosity, compassion, and true valour ; and to conform, as far as is consistent with the unchangeable laws of virtue, to the innocent customs, modern improvements, and habits of living which prevail in the rising age. In you, therefore, we look for an exemplification of these duties of charity. We seek in you that catholick and accommodating temper, which suffereth long and is kind ; which is willing to gratify harmless humours, when there is a prospect of thence doing good ; and which will relax somewhat of the rigour of favourite maxims, for the sake of advancing the interests of humanity and religion. Recollect, my fathers, that you once were young, and had then the same fondness for novelty and figure, which you are now ready to condemn in your children's children. The story which is told of Barzillai is highly creditable to his heart and mind. Though too old to hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women, yet he did not wish that the pleasure of such musick should be lost to others. Through fear of being burdensome at the court of David, on account of his infirmities, he denied himself the flattering honours of being feasted at the monarch's table : he, however, would have



Chimham, who was of an age to relish convivial joys, go over with the king, and receive the attentions designed for himself. How delicately also are you hence taught, that there is a time, when it is proper for you to retire from the noise and splendour of even lawful amusements, and to permit to your younger friends, without interruption and without censure, the recreations suited to their state ! Like Barzillai, may your retirement and abstinence be ordered with wisdom, and may candour like his guide your opinions concerning the enjoyments of others. Like all the good and charitable, who have preceded you in the way of salvation, may the knowledge and love of mankind flourish in your hearts ; and may you live and die in the exercise of that benevolence, which you hope to experience from your final judge !

6. You are lastly exhorted to the exercise of patience. ‘ That the aged men be sound in patience.’ Of this virtue you have certainly need. Your many and multiplying sorrows dispose you sometimes to complain of the burden of life. To you the evil days, so often predicted, have now come. To you the years, at once so long desired and dreaded, have arrived, in which you say, ‘ We have no

pleasure.' You ask in vain for the companions of your youthful days ; in vain for the pleasurable scenes of other years. Objects and employments, once your sources of happiness, are now chiefly exhausted. The world denies you most of your former comforts. Your desires fail, and your fears increase. Your passions have lost their vivacity, and your intellects their acuteness. The obtuse perceptions forbid the facilities of new acquisitions, and the traiterous memory reluctantly and tardily advances her ancient treasures. Under these disabilities and discouragements, how natural with the aged patriarch to refuse to be comforted !

Endeavour, nevertheless, my brethren, to display in this dreary season, that elevation of feeling and of intellect, which is superiour to adversity. Behold, we count them happy who endure with fortitude inevitable ills. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and know that it reared him an imperishable monument. Ye also shall reap an ample reward for your patient sufferings. Soon will the wheels of time roll you to your journey's end. Soon will you have run your race, and finished your course. So run the remainder of it, that you may obtain the prize of immortality. With

an eye of patience mark the progress of ruin in these clayey tabernacles. With patience behold the frivolity of children, the impetuosity of youth, the ambition of manhood ; and let not your indignation rise against the world, when you see it plunged in ten thousand schemes, which you know will end in vanity and vexation of spirit. These things admit of no effectual remedy on this side heaven. You may do somewhat toward abating the excesses of passion by your prayers and example ; but you do not well to be angry at the impertinence, rashness, or disasters of fools. Look forward to another country for perfect repose. In the climes above the wicked will forever cease from troubling, and there the weary will be at rest. In heaven there is no temptation to resist, no enemy to avoid, no disease to cure, and no death to apprehend. Thither direct the eyes of your faith. Thither ascend on the wings of hope. And thither may you at length arrive, where your faith will be turned to vision, and your hope into complete enjoyment.



## HYMN.

ETERNAL God, enthron'd on high,  
 Whom angel hosts adore ;  
 Who yet to suppliant dust art nigh,  
 Thy presence I implore.

O guide me down the steep of age,  
 And keep my passions cool ;  
 Teach me to scan the sacred page,  
 And practise every rule.

My flying years time urges on,  
 My strength must soon decay ;  
 My friends, my youth's companions gone,  
 Can I expect to stay ?

But thou canst cheer my mortal hour,  
 On thee my hope depends ;  
 Support me by almighty power,  
 While dust to dust descends.

Then let my soul, O gracious God,  
 Ascend to realms of day ;  
 And in that sacred blest abode,  
 Its endless anthems pay.

## PRAYER.

O LORD, thou hast been the dwelling-  
 place of the children of men in all generations !  
 I offer thee my humble thanks that thou hast

made me a rational being, and taught me to rejoice in thy works, and to shew forth thy praise. Thou art my hope, O God; thou hast been my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the birth. Thou art he that watched with parental tenderness over my infantile years, and in the slippery paths of childhood supported my steps. In seasons of danger thou hast protected me; in affliction hast comforted me; and, amidst all the enterprizes and labours of manhood, thine arm hath been my defence and salvation. Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not. Strengthen me to declare thy goodness unto this generation, and the power of religion unto the children of the age. May all, who take knowledge of me, perceive that I have been educated in the school of Jesus, and trained to virtue by his holy discipline. Enable me still to manifest the meek and teachable temper becoming his followers. As I am daily losing a portion of my knowledge through mental decay, may I diligently endeavour to supply its loss by new acquisitions. Teach me, O maker of my frame, the measure of my days, and may the conviction that my stay on earth will be short, lead me to be grave and serious in my de-

portment. Incline me to be temperate in all things ; and to watch and pray always, that I enter not into temptation. O Lord, I desire to believe thy word, and to trust thy faithfulness. May my faith wax stronger and stronger, and my hope in the promises of Christ become brighter and brighter. Endue me with that charity, which shall so exalt and refine my spirit, as that I shall be free from malevolent affections, and able to trace thine image, and acknowledge a portion of thy spirit in every human being. Assist me to bear with fortitude the evils and distresses, with which thou shalt see fit to visit me during the remainder of my life. Suffer me not to be covetous of the dust of the ground, with which I am so soon to be covered, but, having food and raiment, may I therewith be content. May I wait with patience all the days of my appointed time, until my change come, when I trust that thou, who, by thy glorious power didst raise up Jesus Christ from the dead, wilt cause me to enter into that rest, which remains for thine obedient people. To thee, be glory forever, Amen.



## DISCOURSE II.

## ON THE DUTIES OF AGED WOMEN.

TITUS II. 3.

*The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour  
as becometh holiness.*

PERSONS who have lived a long time upon earth, and who of course have passed through a great variety of scenes, present themselves to our view in an interesting point of light. Their experience, in many cases, is of more worth to them, than the strength of the young, or the erudition of the learned. They have survived most of their early acquaintances; they have witnessed many changes in the opinions, fashions, and aspects in the world; they have had numerous proofs of the goodness of God in deliverance from dangers, supports under weakness, and consolations in trouble; sedateness, reflexion, and frequent solitude have occupied the place

of personal attractions and sensitive pleasures ; and to the blithsome spring and fervid summer of life have succeeded the sober sadness of autumn, if not the frowns and horrors of winter. These circumstances give an importance and a dignity to the aged, and inspire a tenderness and a concern for their characters, which the younger orders of society, though virtuous and honourable, cannot possess and inspire.

But though age has its honours and consolations, it has also its duties ; and where duty is to be performed, or service rendered, the pen of admonition may be usefully employed. Will you permit me therefore, my respected friends, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, whilst I unfold the properties of that holy behaviour which the apostle recommends ?

Behaviour is a word of extensive import ; and refers not only to the general course of life, but also to actions however trivial, which assist in forming the character. As actions flow from the heart, so the heart is expressed in the behaviour. To regulate the behaviour is, therefore, to regulate the heart as well as the conduct. I accordingly consider a behaviour becoming holiness, as requiring you to be just

and discreet, gentle and benevolent, serious and rational, instructive and prudent, resigned and pious.

1. *That you be in behaviour as becometh holiness, my aged friends, you should be just in forming your opinions, and discreet in expressing them.* The clause, immediately following the text, is a charge that you 'be not false accusers.' It is not certainly to be hence understood, that you are peculiarly prone to an habit of calumny. For who, alas, in this particular, can say how often he offends? But it is universally known, that in your eyes the world wears a different face, from what it wore when you managed its affairs, and were intimately conversant with the changing scene. Any alteration of the times may appear to you an alteration for the worse. New customs may seem to imply the degeneracy of the age; and a change in the forms of religion you may deem a diminution of its power. "Manners are no longer simple, as they were once: fashions are not rational and elegant, as heretofore: youth is become noisy, petulant, and irreverent to its seniors: rank and station are no longer treated with respect. Moral virtue has diminished: tradesmen have lost their honesty, servants their ready and punc-



tual obedience. Even in personal appearance the rising generation is far inferiour to the last. The very course, and aspect, and energy of nature sympathise in the general transformation. The seasons are no longer regular and genial: the verdure of the fields is impaired: flowers have lost their odours, fruits their relish."\* In these respects, however, you may be erroneous. Good and bad people there are in all periods of the world. At one time some vices may be more prevalent than at another; but there doubtless is a part of every generation, who fear God and keep his commandments. Though zeal for religion may have diminished since your early days, yet possibly in its stead there may be more knowledge and more charity, without which both knowledge and zeal are like sounding brass and a tinkling cymball. Though fashions have varied, yet perhaps the degree of human pride may not have increased: and if the influences of the heavens are less propitious than formerly, the arts and conveniences of life are proportionably multiplied and improved.

\* Gisborne.

But however the times and manners may incur your censure, you have no need to be taught the importance of being just and cautious in your opinions of individual characters. Feeling all the force of your religious obligations, you will preserve the laws of righteousness engraven on your hearts; and will uniformly act under the influence of that charity, 'which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.'

2. *That your behaviour, my aged friends, may adorn the doctrine of your religion, it is also necessary that you should be gentle and benevolent in your dispositions.* Your long intercourse with an ungentle world, the various vicissitudes through which you have passed, and the grievous calamities which you must have suffered, all tend to sour the temper, and chill the ardour of the generous heart. Hence great allowance is due to the coldness and insensibility, which sometimes mark the decline of life. Accustomed long since to see and hear nothing new under the sun, you are apt to become disgusted with the trifles that captivate the young, and vexed with the toils of the middle aged, and consequently to contract an apathy of feeling and a peevishness of manner, which render you uncomfortable in

yourselves, unpleasant to your friends, and unamiable to the world. Remembering the failings to which you are prone, you will carefully guard against them. Keep in mind the wonderful efficacy of sweetness of temper and gentleness of manners. Consider that your frequent infirmities necessarily lay a burden of care upon your children and dependents, which a pliant and accommodating spirit will vastly diminish. Recollect that the wisdom from above is gentle, easy to be entreated; and that goodness is a fruit of the spirit, which above all things is pleasing to the eye, and savoury to the taste. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, habits of benevolence. Be pitiful; be courteous. Although many of the ties, which once bound you to life, are dissolved, still feel yourselves connected with those around you by strong and tender bands. Exert yourselves occasionally to enter into their feelings; often lend an ear to their sorrows; and let the law of kindness dwell upon your tongues.

3. *Be entreated also, my aged friends, to be serious and rational in your general deportment.* To a sober mind it is an indecorous, and even disgusting sight, to see those, who



are on the last stage of life, emulating the gaities of the young. To behold roses blooming on those heads, which time has covered with his frost, and those forms, which decrepitude has invaded, subjected to the torturing discipline of fashion, is no less ridiculous in the eye of censure, than painful to the moral sensibilities. Such conduct is irrational, and bespeaks a vacant mind ; it is unchristian, and bespeaks an unsanctified heart. The precepts of your religion do not prohibit cheerfulness ; they on the contrary inspire it : yet there is a vast difference between that serene and peaceful joy, which, alighted at the altar of devotion, burns with a pure and steady flame, and the interrupted flashes of unhallowed mirth. The holy matron, therefore, while she banishes the dejection and petulance, which are sometimes attendant on old age, religiously guards against habitual levity. She encourages no trifling and foolish conversation. Her serious and dignified demeanour restrains the sallies of licentious wit, and silences the tongue of frivolity and nonsense. Array yourselves, my honoured friends, in these robes of decency ; and beautify yourselves with the graces of christian moderation ! In your social inter-

course rather deny yourselves the liberty which you might safely use, than exceed the limits of what is expedient. You will rarely repent, in moments of reflexion, of having consumed too little time in amusement, of having said too little on topicks of merriment, or of having too sparingly tasted of the cup of pleasure.

4. *Be exhorted, likewise, to be instructive and prudent among your friends and acquaintances.* Our apostle makes it part of the character of holy women, 'that they be teachers of good things ; that they may teach the young women' the several virtues of discretion, chastity, and submission to their husbands. This is no unreasonable injunction of St. Paul. To the young the wisdom of age is immensely important. It therefore highly becomes you, my christian mothers, to communicate to your daughters the maxims of prudence, the useful information, and religious knowledge, which a long life may have enabled you to treasure. Your years and experience, if you have wisely employed them, render you highly estimable in the eyes of your sex. You are thence qualified by Providence for giving wholesome counsels, for detecting the snares which are spread for

unwary innocence, and for imposing salutary restraints on the inconsiderate and vain. Employ, therefore, your influence in teaching wisdom to the unwise, and prudence to the inadvertent ; in warning the thoughtless, converting the devious, and fixing the good in their virtuous purposes. Confine not your watchfulness and advice to your children and grandchildren, nor to your kindred and connexions ; but seek opportunities of doing good to the whole household of faith. Into whatever circle you may occasionally fall, let it be clearly understood, either by deliberate advice, or incidental remark, or whilst indulging the flow of elegant conversation, that you have both a reverence and a love of the domestick virtues, which the context enumerates. Surely, next to the regulation of your own hearts, and the salvation of your own souls, you cannot be actuated by a worthier design, than that of expanding the intellects, improving the morals, and promoting the everlasting welfare of the younger portions of your sex. Impress, then, their opening minds with the sacred lessons of truth, purity, and goodness, and by all the endearments of maternal love, engage them to an early profession of religion and observance of its rites.



5. Lastly... *An holy behaviour implies resignation and piety with regard to your maker.* Whether justly or not, it has often been remarked, that love of life increases with age, and the sooner we are about to relinquish the world, the stronger becomes our attachment to its possessions. Certain it is, that advanced life is frequently attended with fretfulness and impatience. It is natural to suppose, that you should be less prodigal of your wealth, when incapable of acquiring it, and of your strength, when you have less of it to spare. It is also to be expected that, familiar as you are with the maxims of prudence, you should be sometimes vexed with the mistakes, follies, and rashness of the young. But remember, my respected friends, that the gospel forbids the indulgence of a murmuring spirit. You were formerly wont to pray for length of days, notwithstanding you were sensible, that rheums and pains and solitude were its inevitable concomitants. God has seen fit to grant your request. Let gratitude, not discontent, dwell in your bosoms. Grieve not at the stated course of things, nor at the unalterable dispensations of providence. When you were young, your pulses beat with joy, and

your hearts dilated with gaiety. Now that other and gloomier years have succeeded, be not querulous under the infirmities, which they necessarily bring. Labour to be quiet and resigned. Harbour no solicitude concerning your worldly support. Soon will your probationary scene be closed. Your God, who has so long clothed and nourished you, will not forsake you, now that your strength fails. Those are well preserved, whom God preserves. His covenant, which is in your favour, is your firmest security; and your trust in him is your best wealth. Let patience have its perfect work. It is now that you most need the consolations of that religion, in which you have long believed. When youth and beauty triumphed in your forms, and when the sensible world was decked with innumerable charms, your health and spirits, without the aid of religion, could endure, after a sort, the troubles of life. But now, when the dim eye is no longer delighted with surrounding objects, and the heavy ear disrelishes the pleasure of a song, ye have need of the fortitude and resignation, which christianity inspires. Exercise them, therefore, in the strength of the Lord. By a meek acquiescence with the allotments of heaven, convince your younger

sisters in the faith, that your religion does really afford the submission which it promises. Convince the world, that your faith in Jesus is not a merely speculative belief, but an operative stimulus, which supports you under all your weaknesses, and enables you, in imitation of Christ, to endure the cross, and to contemn the trivial vexations of the present life, in prospect of the joy, which is set before you. Testify to yourselves, and to all around you, that your piety does not consist in a mere warmth of the affections, which is transient as the morning cloud ; but that it is a principle of love to God, settled in your hearts, and regulating your behaviour.

A rational and uniform piety is the loveliest feature in any character ; indeed any character, without it, is essentially defective. But in none are devotional exercises more necessary and becoming, than in a sex, which by nature and custom is precluded the scenes of restless activity and daring ambition. More especially is piety your duty and your glory, when advanced in life. When the amusements that once pleased you, please you no longer, and the places that knew you, in a manner know you no more, to whom can you



so properly look, as unto the God of your life and the length of your days? When the appearance of objects is changed around you, to what being can you repair with equal confidence, as to him, with whom is no variable-ness, nor even the shadow of turning? When the streams of earthly comfort fail, is it not your wisdom to apply to the source of all consolation? When the foundations of terrestrial support are destroyed, will you not rest on the rock of ages? When the waves and the flames waste your substance, will you not solace yourselves in the possession of piety, whose merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver, and whose gain is preferable to that of fine gold? Verily, if any thing can render you happy in yourselves, and respectable in the view of others, it is an habitual intercourse with the Father of Spirits. 'For favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.'

Above all, it is piety which makes you amiable in the eyes of him, who looketh not at the outward appearance, but who looketh at the heart. It is communion with God, that will increase your acquaintance with him, your confidence in him, and enable you to walk in the light of his countenance. This, more than

any thing, will give you clear and bright views, and just notions, and a keen relish of heavenly bliss. And how desirable is it, that you should be in some measure familiarized to the employments of a state, on which you hope shortly to enter ! How important, that you be in the habit of placing your affections on things above, with which you expect soon to be conversant, and of loosening them from things below, which, in a little time, you are certain of leaving ! Cultivate, therefore, the feelings, temper, and language of devotion. Draw nigh to your heavenly Father, and with an holy boldness spread your wants and sorrows at his feet. Beg of him higher degrees of faith, greater measures of holiness, a warmer zeal, and a stronger love. Plead with him the mediation and promises of his Son ; and pray that more of Christ's spirit may daily be formed within you. Such holy exercises will make you godlike in your tempers, and heavenly in your conversation. They will help you to sustain the burden of your years, and minister strength to your infirmities. They will blunt the edge of your misfortunes, and turn away your thoughts from disasters, which thicken upon you as your sun declines, and

the shades of night approach. They will smoothe your passage out of life, deprive the grave of half its terrors, and assist you to pass that dreary vale with a cheerful hope of a future resurrection to eternal life.

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### HYMN.

MY God, my everlasting hope !

I live upon thy truth ;

Thy hands have held my childhood up,  
And strengthened all my youth.

New wonders, Lord, my eyes have seen  
With each revolving year ;

Thou know'st the days that yet remain :  
I trust them to thy care.

Wilt thou forsake my hoary hairs,

And leave my fainting heart ?

Who shall sustain my sinking years,  
If God, my strength, depart ?

Down to the silent vale of death

Will be my next remove ;

O may these poor remains of breath  
Declare thy wondrous love.

When I am buried in the dust,

My flesh shall be thy care ;

These with'ring limbs with thee I trust,  
To raise them strong and fair.



## PRAYER.

O ALMIGHTY God, the father of mercies, and the source of all consolation ! As an humble disciple of Jesus Christ, I cast myself at the foot of thy throne, and supplicate thy pardon and favour. Lift upon me the light of thy countenance, and enable me to fulfil the duties of my station. Thou broughtest me into life at the time and under circumstances, which seemed good unto thee ; and all the stages and events of my earthly pilgrimage have been under the direction of thy holy providence. Now, therefore, O my heavenly Father, assist me to finish the work, which thou hast given me to do. Make me candid and charitable in my sentiments, sincere in my professions of friendship, and uniformly discreet in my temper and conduct. Keep my tongue from evil, and my lips from speaking guile. May I seek peace and pursue it. O thou, who art love, and dwellest in love, teach me to imitate thy pure and perfect benevolence. Dispose me still to be useful : and because my stay on earth will be very short, suffer me to waste no portion of it in fruitless

complaints or idle conversation. If my power of exertion is lessened, make me more anxious to diffuse around me the lustre of a good example. May I open my mouth with wisdom, and may my conversation serve to enlighten and edify my friends. As long as I live may I be a teacher of good things. Help me to speak of Christ to all who look for redemption from the grave ; and to convince all over whom I have influence that his religion alone can clear that gloomy valley of its darkness and plagues. I commit myself to thy guidance, O thou, who hast fed me all my life long, and redeemed me from evil. Permit me never to murmur, when I am chastened of thee, nor to distrust thy watchful care. I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. My fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them. I also have found in thee a wise, powerful, kind, and faithful guardian. O thou friend of the righteous, sustain and comfort me. While my flesh and my heart are failing me, do thou be the strength of my heart, and my everlasting portion. The nearer I approach to death, the more devoutly may I walk with thee : And at last may I

come to the grave, like as a shock of corn  
cometh in, in its season, my hoary head be-  
ing a crown of glory unto me, because found  
in the way of righteousness. I make my re-  
quests unto thee, O thou who hearest prayer,  
in the name of Jesus Christ, my saviour.  
Amen.



## DISCOURSE III.

## ON THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS.

EPH. V. 25.

*Husbands, love your wives.*

NO connexion in human life is equally important with that of marriage. It is alike the dictate of nature and the ordinance of heaven. It was designed by the benevolent father of men to be a source of the purest satisfactions; tending to mitigate the sorrows, and multiply the comforts, of this transitory life. In all ages and nations, arrived at a good degree of civilization, the conjugal union has been solemnized with the forms of religion; and in so far as its laws have been obeyed, and its rights respected, civil society has been flourishing and happy. Christians, especially, have ever considered the married condition as infinitely salutary to the maintenance, education, and well being of our kind. The institution is accordingly countenanced in their scriptures, and the duties arising from this near and affectionate re-

lation are there explained and enforced with clearness, pungency, and warmth. The just expectations of wives from their husbands may be learned from the following passages :

‘Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it : so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself : for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church....For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife ; and they two shall be one flesh. ...Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself....Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence....Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them....Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled ; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge....Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered....If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.’

To you, my brethren, who sustain the important and endearing relation of husbands, suffer me now to address myself ; and to say, that the love which you owe to your wives, consists, first, in affection for their persons... secondly, in fidelity to the marriage vow...and, thirdly, in a due provision for their maintenance and comfort.

*The first duty of a husband is to love his wife.* There is a love, which is proper to all the relations, that can be sustained in life. Every man is obliged by the law of Christ to love his neighbour as himself. That is, he is bound to render the same justice to his neighbour, which he rationally may expect that his neighbour will show to him. The rich are obligated so to love the poor, as to impart to them a portion of their substance. A man ought to love his friend in such a manner, as to exert himself in his favour in a moment of distress, and, by all honourable means, to promote his welfare. Parents should love their children, and children their parents. Rulers should love their subjects, and these their rulers. But the love peculiar to the state of marriage is distinct from that of patriotism, friendship, or kindred. It is an affection pure and ardent, tender and generous.



It is not that blind instinct, which impels the inferiour animals to indiscriminate society ; it is a sentiment, which, excited by desire and guided by reason, selects some favourite individual as the object of attachment, there to bestow its warmth and 'confine its solitudes. This love is the basis of domestick happiness ; and this love, my brethren, you owe to your wives.

Consider that they were the objects of your choice. It is your happiness to live in a country, whose laws, customs, and manners give you this indulgence. In forming the conjugal union you were undoubtedly somewhat influenced by the understanding, education, family, and wealth of your wives. You doubtless sought for qualities that would endure the storms of affliction, as well as delight in the sunshine of prosperity. You were not so weak, it is to be hoped, as to be dazzled and captivated by mere external graces and adventitious decorations. You had the good sense to use your ears, as well as your eyes. Friends probably gave you advice in this momentous concern, and you were prudent enough to make it the subject

of your serious deliberation. Yet after all, you principally consulted your own taste. You considered that unless your fancy, as well as judgment, might have a voice in the election, you had no right to expect that your union would be happy. Of course you followed your inclination, and connected yourselves conformably to your best judgment. Now, therefore, respect the choice you have made; and cherish, by every reasonable means the flame of affection, which glowed in your bosoms on the nuptial day.

Consider that you severally promised to love your wife in the marriage covenant. The vow of God is upon you. The ties of honour and religion hold you fast to this engagement. Do you wish a discharge from this solemn obligation? Do you plead the imperfections and errors of your wife in excuse for your neglect to fulfil it? Imperfections and errors are the natural inheritance of human kind. You never expected to marry an angel. Remember that you have faults yourself. If unmindful of these, and continually mindful of your wife's, you will quickly see an end of peace. Her most prudent and amiable conduct will be unable to retain your love and secure your confidence.

Consider that love and tenderness on your part is a suitable return for submission and obedience on hers. Because it is impossible, where there are two persons and two wills, that there should not, at certain times, be different wills, God and nature have enjoined submission on the woman. To compensate her for this frequent sacrifice of inclination, you are to love your wife above all other women, and to continue this affection as long as you live. You are to indulge towards her no bitterness of language. The harsh words of a stranger, or of an enemy, she will hear with indifference; but from you she has better hopes. Do not disappoint her reasonable expectations. Plant no thorns in a bosom, which is filled with the liveliest concern for your honour and felicity.

Consider the intimate as well as indissoluble union that subsists between you. In almost every other connexion in life what serves the advantage of one, promotes the disadvantage of another. At least, the interests of the nearest friends, without the pale of marriage, sometimes interfere. But in this enclosure the interests of both the parties are peculiarly one. Your property is your wife's property; your children are her children; your



fame and destiny are her's. The address of Ruth to Naomi breathes the sentiment of every faithful wife to her husband. Since, therefore, what serves to mar the comfort of one, will be likely to give uneasiness and displeasure to the other, see that you guard the peace of your wife with the same solicitude, as you do your own. Let your outward civility be accompanied with real good nature, and let a delicate concern for her welfare manifest itself in the whole of your conduct.

Consider, lastly, that this love to your wife will be abundantly repaid to you in your own peace. The indulgence of the benevolent affections is attended with pleasure, and of the malevolent with pain. There is rarely a condition in life so unpleasant, as may not be rendered tolerable by the exercise of kindness; and no state of society, without it, can be comfortable. Most of all do candour, moderation, and gentleness become the married-condition. Love, therefore, your wife with a pure heart fervently. This is as much your wisdom as it is your duty. It will make you easy in yourself, and give composure and satisfaction to the heart of your friend.

Secondly...*The love commanded you in the text, implies fidelity to the marriage cov-*

*enant.* The law of nature clearly evinces the duty of fidelity in marriage, by the equality that is preserved in the number of male and female infants. The author of society hence instructs us, that one man was made for one woman ; and if this law is invaded, some men must be deprived of the benefits of marriage, and one of its ends, which is the multiplication of the species, is thence in a measure defeated. What is thus plainly intimated by the light of nature, is expressly inculcated by divine revelation. Adam had only one Eve. If polygamy was in any instances practised among the Jews, it was tolerated on account of the hardness of their hearts. In the beginning it was not so ; nor in any subsequent period of the world did it ever ought to be so. It was a hurtful innovation on the laws of human society. It was an innovation, which our Saviour forever destroyed among his disciples. He republished the original rule of marriage, saying, ‘ He which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.’ This is the will of God : this is the ordination of

Jesus Christ, and of his primitive apostles. The union formed by marriage is, in deed and in truth, one and indivisible. It is to consist of one man and one woman only, and cannot be dissolved, except by the decease of one of the parties. An alteration of this law of reason and religion, would evidently be followed by a multitude of evils. If the conjugal union were not to continue through life, its satisfactions would be lessened, and its inconveniences and sorrows mightily increased. Affliction would lose the hope of consolation, and prosperity its charm : parents would be ignorant of their children, and children of their parents ; and the joys arising from family, kindred, and friendship, would be either wholly unknown or speedily lost.

The arguments against polygamy and concubinage conclude with greater force against adultery. Fidelity in marriage is so primary and important a duty, that a violation of it destroys at once both root and branch of domestick society. There is no prospect nor chance for matrimonial happiness, where either party is unfaithful to its vows. Infidelity in either man or woman, is probably the basest falsehood, the most inexcusable folly,



and the blackest injustice that, in a christian community, can be committed. In this case the hymeneal bands become like flax, which the flame has scorched. To this fidelity, husbands, you are as strongly obliged as your wives. Though the consequences of their infidelity are more horrible to society, than those of similar wickedness in you, yet remember, that you make the same promises, which are obligatory on them. If you break these promises, in the view of God and good men your infidelity is as criminal as theirs, and is justly deserving of the same damnation. Are you a son? What would be your feelings if the husband of your mother should live in adultery! Are you a father? How would your indignation rise, if the man, to whose arms you consigned a virtuous and unoffending daughter, should wander from her bed! Such, in kind, but much sharper in degree, are the miseries, which you prepare for an innocent wife, when you are false to your vows. You wound her feelings. You make her uncomfortable in herself, and an object of suspicion and reproach to the world. More: You are your own enemy. You take the direct method of alienating her affections from you, and yours from her, and thus of rendering yourself wretched. The

love of your wife cannot alone make you happy ; she also must possess yours. It is mutual kindness that softens the heart, and refines, sweetens, and blesses the relation. Let parents receive ever so much obedience and honour from their children, they must nevertheless themselves love their children to be happy in them. We cannot indeed be at ease in this world, unless the people with whom we associate, perform their duties to us ; but our principal felicity will ever spring from the conscientious performance of our duties to them. If this remark is true with respect to other relations, it is especially so in regard to the married state. Were religion, therefore, out of the question, fidelity to your wife is your highest wisdom and best policy.

Contrast now the sober satisfactions of continence and fidelity, with the precarious and turbulent life of the sensualist. You cannot be unfaithful to the partner of your bed without “ either the corruption of innocence, or the enjoyment of corruption : and either of these naturally overwhelms the soul with so much confusion, and distraction, and remorse, as must, if you are not hardened into the malignity of fiends, either conclude in the bitter-

ness of repentance, or in the distractions of despair. For certainly, if you think at all, you cannot bear the reflection of having corrupted innocence, of having betrayed a virtuous and valuable woman to infamy, and all the dreadful evils that await it, to poverty and prostitution, and such a corruption of body and mind as will render her at once the reproach and horror of human nature. On the other hand, can you, with less reproach to your reason, give yourself up to the arms of a prostitute? to mercenary and polluted embraces? to the wiles of serpents, that twine around you, for no other reason but to prey upon you, and sting you to death?''\*

In sum. Infidelity is a crime in wedlock of the deepest dye, which no tears of repentance can wash away, and causes a wound which cannot be healed. Therefore listen to the instructions of holy wisdom, and *keep thyself from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eye-lids. For she hath cast down many wounded; yea many strong men have been slain by her. Her*

\* Delany.



*house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. For by means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread, and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. For jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts. Whoso, therefore, committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.*

Thirdly. In saying, Husbands love your wives, the apostle virtually says, make due provision for their maintenance and comfort.

This is your duty as an husband, because, as a man, God has given you a strength of body and hardihood of mind superiour to what commonly falls to the lot of woman. The management of the means of your living is entrusted to your hands. Your education and habits of intercourse with the busy part

of mankind make you better qualified, than your wife, for accumulating and securing the goods of fortune. She is weak, but you are strong ; she is conversant with domestick concerns, you with the activity and enterprise of the world. Employ, therefore, your powers for her protection and support. She has been used to rely for nourishment and defence on a parental arm ; it is your's to supply the providence from which you have taken her. Be to her a father, under the wing of whose care she shall always feel herself safe, at whose board she and her children shall be comfortably fed, and from whose wardrobe they shall be decently clothed. Grudge not this provident concern for her, whom you have most tenderly attached to your person and estate. She was ordained for your company, not for your service ; and should be treated as your associate, not as your slave. She was originally taken, not from your head, that she should rule you, nor from your feet, that you should insult her ; but, from your side, that she should be your equal, and the partner of your bosom. Accordingly your misfortunes are hers, and there is no calamity that can befall you, in the burden of which she will not participate. It is reasonable, then, that she

should be a mutual sharer with you in the necessities, accommodations, and elegancies of life.

This is not all. You are to contemplate the possibility of leaving your wife a friendless widow, anxiously caring for a fatherless family. Hence your duty to her obliges you, whilst living, to provide for her future exigencies. In doing this, you are to consider the station you have filled, the style in which you have lived, and the property which you will probably leave. If your wife has hitherto dwelt in a mansion of ease, and tasted the pleasures of a plenteous table, it will be cruel in you to deprive her of these comforts, when the will of heaven has made a separation between you. Hard, at best, is the fate of the solitary widow : with the most you can do, you cannot make her happy ; the least you can do, is to shield her from want. If, in the exercise of a generous principle, you have formerly consulted her health and contentment, they cannot be indifferent to you in time to come. Place her, therefore, in circumstances which shall command for her, and consequently for your memory, the respects of your common friends.

In giving this exhortation, it will be un-



derstood by every reasonable person, that impossibilities are nowise enjoined. Many husbands there are, who are prevented through multiplied adversities from carrying into effect their benevolent desires. But the duty which has been inculcated contains a solemn warning to heads of families against idleness, negligence, profusion, gaming, and all such habits, as tend to enervate the faculties of a man and dissipate his property. Let us never hear of pretensions to conjugal kindness from a man, who is at once poor and slothful : he violates every law of reason, honour, and conscience ; and may be said to live upon the tears of his widow and the blood of his children.

These are the duties, my brethren, which are comprized in the direction given you by the apostle in our text. They are all founded in the unchangeable truth and fitness of things, as well as in the christian scriptures. You ought to esteem your obligation to fulfil them an act of kindness in the Great Legislator. It is with these duties, as with the other branches of the law of righteousness, the performance of them is followed with peace, and the violation of them with remorse. There is no such thing as happiness in flying from

the restraints of sound morality. When you seek to be liberated from the rules of justice, you seek to cast yourselves off from the sweetest privileges of society. If you give not honour to whom honour is due, by whom will you be honoured yourselves? If you will contribute nothing to the gratification of others, by whom will your pleasure be promoted? If you will love none, who will love you? If you will pay nothing, how can you righteously hope to receive? Be happy that God has ordained it not good for you to be alone; that he has connected the duties with the satisfactions of life; that in blessing you are blessed; and that you most effectually serve yourselves, when you most powerfully promote the welfare of your kind.

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### HYMN.

HAIL, virtuous, happy pair,  
 In holy marriage join'd!  
 May you the joys of wedlock share,  
 And mental rapture find!

A sacred union this,  
 Deriv'd from heavenly love;  
 And exquisitely great the bliss  
 Two souls in union prove.

Chaste, faithful, loving, pure,  
 Preserve connubial rites ;  
 And to the end of life ensure  
 True conjugal delights.

Both hand in hand must go  
 In all that you pursue ;  
 And have, in all things, while below,  
 Each other's good in view.

Love him who made you one :  
 He is the source of love :  
 Thus when on earth his will you've done,  
 You'll praise his name above.

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### PRAYER.

O THOU benevolent father of mankind !  
 I thank thee that thou hast made me a rational and social being, and permitted me to improve the sympathies of my nature by the conjugal union. I implore thy blessing upon me in the character of a husband. Towards her whom thou hast given to be my wife may I feel and manifest the sincerest affection and an unceasing kindness. Teach me to overlook her imperfections ; duly to estimate her virtues ; to administer needful reproofs and advice in a spirit of meekness and gentleness ; and by all the means which religion can justifi-



fy to promote her happiness. Make me a partaker of her sorrows; may I rejoice in her contentment; and may she ever seem amiable in my eyes. Save me alike from moroseness and imprudence, from churlishness and violence. Grant that my conversation with her may be instructive, discreet, and affable; and may my whole conduct, in this near and important relation, be marked with the dignity of a man, and adorned with the virtues of a christian. Make me constant, O thou God of order and purity, as well from inclination as from principle. Permit no unhallowed flame to kindle in my breast, and no impurity to debase my character, lest I give mine honour unto others, and strangers be filled with my wealth; and I mourn at the last, when my flesh and my body are consumed, and say, how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me. To this end wilt thou teach me moderation in the use of lawful pleasures, and watchfulness against sudden temptations. Assist me, O thou maker of my frame, and author of all my faculties, to be industrious and frugal. Never suffer me to waste my substance or time in riotous living

or idle speculations. Take from me a slothful, and endow me with a diligent and active spirit, and with wisdom in choosing my employments and directing my energies. By no follies or extravagance of mine may the wife of my bosom be rendered miserable whilst I live, or destitute when I am dead. Wilt thou cause me ever to feel my responsibility to her, to all my dependents, and to society in general. At the same time, I beseech thee, O my God, let not ambition, avarice, nor vanity have a dwelling in my heart. Forbid me to seek great worldly possessions for myself or my family. Give me continually to remember that thou hast made me to be immortal, and that in the resurrection world I shall neither hunger nor thirst any more, and that its blessed inhabitants will neither marry nor be given in marriage. With a reference to that holy state may I daily live, and finally enter upon its eternal felicities, through thine infinite mercy in Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

## DISCOURSE IV.

## ON THE DUTIES OF WIVES.

EPHES. v. 33.

*—and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

IT may not be amiss, before I proceed to the consideration of this subject, to remark, that marriage is one of those things, which, however lightly it may be esteemed, or spoken of by the gay and dissolute, is, notwithstanding, a matter of the utmost consequence and importance, as the welfare of society in general, together with the ease and happiness of individuals, doth in a great measure depend upon it : I cannot, therefore, but be of opinion, that the unbounded freedom of speech, the unwearied endeavours of licensed ridicule, with which it is so familiarly and so universally treated, hath greatly contributed to the frequent contempt of this duty on each side, and the no less frequent violation of it of late years



so visible amongst us. Let us endeavour, then, to rescue it from the hands of libertines, and the mouth of the scoffer. And to this end I propose to point out to you the several parts of this reciprocal duty, and to recommend those virtues which are more immediately necessary towards the performance of it.

‘Let every one of you,’ says St. Paul, ‘so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.’

Under the two leading and essential points which are here mentioned by the holy apostle, we may fairly comprehend all those duties that are requisite to make the marriage state easy and happy : love and affection will naturally produce tenderness and fidelity ; and reverence will as constantly and invariably be attended with humility, prudence, and devotion ; and wherever these unite, they cannot fail to constitute mutual and lasting felicity.

I shall, with regard to the subject under our present consideration, endeavour to point out to you, wherein the duty of a wife to her husband doth principally consist.

The wife, then, should be faithful and constant, humble and obedient, prudent and discreet, tender and kind, affectionate and pious.

The sovereign virtue requisite in the married state, is FIDELITY, without which it cannot subsist: no perfections or qualities whatever can make amends for the want of it; no excuses whatever can be admitted to palliate the least departure from it: both parties are bound in the most solemn manner, to maintain and preserve it inviolable, and the infringement of it will render them obnoxious to the resentment both of God and man: the necessity is, in truth, so self-evident, that I shall dwell no further on it at present, than to observe, that the neglect of it on the part of the wife, is always attended with more fatal and destructive consequences than on the part of the husband; because she is the guardian of his honour as well as her own; because, he suffers for her guilt, and is punished for her iniquity.

‘A virtuous woman,’ says Solomon, ‘is a crown to her husband, but she that maketh ashamed, is as rottenness in his bones.’ It is to be hoped, that in a christian country, there are not many instances to be found of conjugal falsehood and infidelity. I shall not at present, therefore, dwell on this point, but proceed to that most necessary and essential duty of a wife, *obedience*.

Society, we know, cannot possibly subsist without subordination : states and kingdoms can never flourish or increase, unless some preside at the helm, to guide and direct, whilst others follow and obey ; without a head, the members cannot perform their offices : without some ruling hand, invested with power and authority to govern, punish or reward, there can be nothing but anarchy and confusion : and the same is equally necessary, in all private connexions : superiour power must be lodged in one hand, and the only doubt that can arise, if any doubt there be, is, to whom that power doth of right belong.

The words of the apostle with regard to this, are very plain and explicit. ‘ The husband,’ says he, ‘ is the head of the wife. Man was not of the woman, but the woman of the man.’ Priority of birth, at their original formation, seeming to imply and point out the precedency : but there is withal a reason, which carries with it the highest conviction, and that is, the visible superiority of one sex over the other, so manifest in the abilities both of mind and body.

Agreeable to the dictates of reason in this respect, as indeed in all others, are the dictates



of religion. Obedience of wives is the commandment of God himself ; ‘ thy desire shall be to thy husband,’ says he ; ‘ he shall rule over thee.’ ‘ Wives submit yourselves,’ says St. Paul, ‘ to your husbands, as unto the Lord :’ that is, be assured that duty towards your husband is part of your duty towards God ; that when you love the one, you please the other ; when you disobey the one, you offend the other : you are bound to obedience not only by the promise made to your husband, but by a still more solemn engagement, by a promise made to the Almighty. God is not only a witness of the contract, but a part of it ; he hath claim to a share in every connexion, duty, and relation, we enter into : the husband cannot release the wife, nor the wife the husband ; the servant his master, nor the master his servant ; the father the son, nor the son his father from the punctual discharge of them, without his divine consent and approbation : and though in regard to individuals, it may so happen, that the direct contrary to what hath been advanced may be indisputably true, no argument can thence be drawn against the general conclusion.

The son may, and frequently hath, a larger portion of parts and understanding than his

father, and servants better genius, sense, and capacity than their masters ; and yet it must be acknowledged, that this, in either case, would be a poor plea for their rebellion and disobedience.

Half the miseries of mankind arise from pride and self-love ; from that vain conceit we are so apt to entertain of ourselves, and of our own abilities.

The good and prudent wife, who is satisfied of that natural superiority of man, which I have just now mentioned, will consider, that in cases of importance, the husband's knowledge and experience should make him a better judge than her ; and therefore she should submit, and in matters of little or no consequence it is surely scarce worth while to dispute about them. If disputes however do arise, mutual good nature and condescension will prevent acrimony, bitterness, and anger. Let the end proposed therefore in all be truth, and not victory, and the desire of both to convince, and not to conquer.

To obedience, therefore, should also be added quietness and HUMILITY. The virtues of a woman were not meant to glare in the dazzling lustre of publick business, but cast, as it were, into the shades of life, in the

mild majesty of private, social, domestick happiness.

‘Let women adorn themselves,’ says St. Paul, ‘in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array ; for I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.’ Silence indeed is for the most part apter to persuade than argument ; when the storm meets with resistance, it is generally the most violent ; and the tender plant, which bends beneath the blast, is much safer than the lofty oak, which seems to defy it. After all, it is the wife’s interest as well as duty, to be in subjection to her husband ; because she, who most easily complies with his will, is, for the most part, indulged in her own ; and she hath the most frequent opportunities to command, who is most ready and most willing to obey. A meek and quiet spirit, we know, is with God of the highest value. It may indeed happen, and frequently doth, that this meek and quiet spirit shall but provoke a morose and surly temper to greater insults ; and that the coward, who finds no resistance, will repeat the blow. But to those, notwithstanding, who have humility, there is this consolation still be-



hind, that however man may despise the jewel, God, who knows its value, will hold it of great price. A thousand testimonies of conjugal fidelity, love, tenderness, affection, and forgiveness, may escape the eye of a vicious or of an indifferent husband, unknown and unregarded ; but that eye, which seeth and knoweth all things, will observe them : and what is still more to be wished and desired, we may be certain, that wherever he sees virtue, he must approve it ; and wherever he approves, he is sure to reward.

Proceed we then to the next essential quality of a good wife, DISCRETION. Conquests acquired by force, are maintained by policy ; and the hearts, which love hath subdued, must be preserved by prudence ; the dominion of youth and beauty is arbitrary and despotick, but, like other tyrannies, seldom of any long duration. Prudence, therefore, that faithful minister, must be called in to subdue the rebel passions, maintain a due balance and proportion, and keep the sovereign on the throne. Whilst tender years and inexperience palliate every error, and excuse every inadvertency, prudence is not, perhaps, so immediately necessary ; but when women have

past that favourable, indulgent season, and have entered into a situation which calls for the exercise of this virtue every hour, it then becomes absolutely and really indispensable ; and the want of it is as inexcusable, as it is fatal and destructive ; and yet, I know not how it is, but almost every other virtue is more frequently to be met with. At that time of life when we most stand in need of it, it is seldom seen, and doth not make its appearance till it can be of little service to us : To wives, we know, it often comes when its powers are languid and ineffectual ; the affection of the husband is already estranged by infidelity, changed by indifference, or decayed by ingratitude ; discretion steps in at last to regain it ; like an able physician, it is not called till the last gasp, when it is much too late to save the patient.

Nothing is in reality so unsuitable to the dignity, so unbecoming the character of a good and virtuous wife, as that indiscreet carelessness and levity of behaviour, which has of late years crept in amongst us. The taste of pleasure and diversions is grown so universal, that family duties, and family decency, and decorum also, are greatly neglected. The old and the young, the married and the single, are so blended together in the general mass of

folly ; the carriage, manners, and behaviour of all are so equally gay and dissolute, that they set the examples of vice, whose duty it is to keep others from it ; and scarce any thing is left to distinguish the matron from her daughter, but the wrinkles which she cannot hide, and the years which she cannot conceal.

When one sex thus forget station, rank, and circumstance, can we be surprised to find the other unwilling to remember it ? When women no longer behave themselves as wives, do they desire, or can they expect to be treated as such ? Whilst there is a desire in every gesture, word, and action, to please all indiscriminately, can we suppose there is a strong or powerful attachment to any individual ? Let those, therefore, who follow a giddy, thoughtless multitude, through the perpetual round of fashionable follies, remember, that amusement is no longer innocent when it interferes with duty ; that example can only countenance that guilt which it doth not extenuate ; and that publick pleasure is dearly bought which is purchased at the expense of private happiness.

Women as well as men are bound by the religion of Christ, not only to avoid vice, but the appearance of it ; not only to be virtuous, but to seem so : besides that, their reputation



is of so tender a nature, that it is not always in the power even of innocence itself to preserve it. Those who have only been careless, are generally censured as guilty, and calumny will often punish for crimes which have never been committed. There is a great degree of imprudence, therefore, in laying ourselves open to suspicion : she, who is so indifferent as to affect folly, is in great danger of falling a sacrifice to it ; and the wife who is very vicious in appearance, doth not deserve much less blame than her who is so in reality. The truly good and virtuous wife, will consider the honour of her husband as a precious jewel entrusted to her care, which it is her duty to preserve free from every spot or blemish that might diminish its lustre or impair its beauty.

The best preservative of female honour, therefore, is female delicacy : modesty is the hand-maid of virtue, appointed to tend, to dress, and serve her : it is, as it were, a kind of armour, which the sex should always bear, both to adorn and to defend them ; and, when that is laid aside, they are neither beautiful nor safe.

There was a time, when the reservedness and modesty of women exempted them from many considerable privileges, which they now enjoy ; when that unbounded freedom of

converse, which the present age allows, was held inconsistent with female delicacy ; when not the gay companion, nor the lively visitant, but the good and prudent wife, were esteemed the best of characters : it would become those, who have introduced and encouraged this change of manners, to consider, whether the pleasures have not interfered with the business, and the duties of life been sacrificed to the impertinencies of it ; whether the matrons of former ages were not, at least, as modest, if not so well bred, as those who come after them ; and whether, what the sex hath gained in politeness, it hath not lost in virtue. There is (if I may be allowed the expression) a sex of soul, as well as body, and the distinction is as visible in the one as in the other. The female mind, as well as form, is naturally more soft and delicate : the spirits more brisk and volatile ; the heart more immediately susceptible of pain or pleasure, than our own : as their frame can boast of finer harmony, symmetry, and proportion, though of less strength, firmness, and activity ; in the same manner, the sentiments of the softer sex abound in a peculiar tenderness, delicacy, and vivacity : if they are not solid, they are refined ; if they are not correct, they are lively ; if they are not just

and serious, they are natural and cheerful ; to each is imparted, by the providence of God, that which the other stands in need of : man was born to govern, to guard, and protect ; woman to obey, to please, and to reward. When men, therefore, sink into sloth and effeminacy, and women assume a masculine boldness and audacity, they are acting contrary to the designs of nature and of God ; and can never be the objects of esteem or approbation, much less of love or affection. Whilst, like neighbouring monarchs, they are careful to remain in their own territories, and do not encroach on each other's borders, they will be respected as lawful sovereigns ; but when, like usurpers, they invade the rights and privileges of each other, they will be treated as such ; and whilst they are employed in the conquest of kingdoms, which do not belong to them, will be deprived of their own.

We pass on, then, to that best cement of domestick happiness, **MUTUAL FORBEARANCE and COMPLACENCY** ; and these, perhaps, like constancy and fidelity, are, in some measure, more necessary on the part of the wife, than of the husband.

Those who have the management and direction of affairs, whatever station, business,



or profession, they are engaged in, must meet with various crosses, misfortunes, and disappointments ; the ways of this life are, at best, but rugged and uneven ; briars and thorns spring up on every side of us ; and, even the most flowery and delightful paths are full of danger ; man, therefore, as most able, is appointed to perform the journey. The greatest part of the world are forced to gain their living by the sweat of their brow : the toil and labour of providing for his household, of acquiring what is necessary and convenient, falls to the lot of the industrious husband. Too well we know, that in an evil and corrupt world, the best intentions, and the most honest endeavours of the best men may be frustrated ; losses, vexations, and troubles are perpetually arising : such accidents, and such we are every day liable to, will sour the sweetest dispositions, throw a gloom over the cheerfullest face, and fill the firmest heart with anguish and disquietude. How then, is the good and virtuous wife, the partner of his joys and sorrows, to behave in the hour of distress ? Is she to reproach his melancholy, to inflame his passion, to embitter his disquietude ? Or, is she, on the other hand, to endeavour to calm his sorrows and soothe his affliction, to consider the wounds

of adversity which pain him as received in her service, the disquietude which he feels, endured for her sake? Is she not to give way to that petulancy or anger which appears in him? to esteem it not as the natural inmate of his breast, but as an importunate, intruding stranger, brought thither by misfortunes and disappointments? The greater, therefore, his sorrows are, the greater should be her care to remove them; her tenderness should increase in proportion to his disquietude, her forbearance to his warmth, her complacency to his uneasiness; her smiles are to make amends for the frowns of the world, and her love and kindness to compensate for its hatred and ingratitude.

But, all those branches of conjugal duty, which are above enumerated, must proceed from that great source of happiness, true and genuine AFFECTION. Love is the active, enlivening, invigorating principle, which must set in motion the whole circle of relative duties; without this, neither child nor father, servant nor master, can acquit themselves well and faithfully, in the discharge of their duty; but, if in them it is requisite, in that which is now before us, it is indispensable: in them it must preside and direct; but in this, it must

itself operate constantly, steadily, and invariably. But it often happens, that indifference holds the place of affection ; and that those, who should be most solicitous about each other's welfare and happiness, are most careless of it ; a state so undesirable, is an emblem of that natural sleep we so often experience, when the soul of man is benumbed and stupified, when nature performs her office and operations with heaviness and reluctance. Instead of being surprised, therefore, that so many are unhappy, it should rather raise our admiration to find so few. When we reflect on the inconsiderable number of those who are joined by love and affection ; when we consider, that half the world are united by ambition, pride, self-interest, force, or artifice, how is it possible they should be blest ? Shall we not rather wonder to see the chain so durable as it is, when the links which compose it are of so weak a nature ? From the want of, or from the loss of affection, flow all those cares and jealousies, all those troubles and animosities, which break the bands of nuptial harmony, and poison the fountain of domestic happiness : Without this, indeed, fidelity hath no proper support to rest itself on, pru-



dence no end to promote, tenderness and complacency no object to employ themselves in the service of ; whereas, on the other hand, where this is, scarce any thing else can be wanted ; it improves the charms of beauty where it is, and supplies the place where it is not ; it commands respect and obedience from the obstinate and perverse, constancy from the most inconstant, discretion from the most indiscreet ; it polishes the indelicate, softens the rude, humbles the proud and haughty ; it adds, in short, to the bloom of youth, health and plenty ; and gives vigour, joy, and pleasure even to old age, sickness, and adversity.

But lastly....The good wife should be pious. Religion is the great bond, which links together, and unites every virtue : piety will insure every fidelity, enforce obedience, increase tenderness, and double affection. When the duty to a husband is considered, as it ought to be considered, as a duty to God also, then, and then only, will it be duly and punctually performed : she, indeed, can never be a good wife, who is not a good Christian. It is not to be expected, that she, who pays no deference or respect to her Creator and her God, will obey her lord and husband ; or that she will ever submit herself to human ordi-

nances, who neglects the divine : whilst, on the other hand, she who is pious and religious, will, at the same time that she is making herself amiable in the sight of man, recommend herself to the favour of God. If her husband is insensible of her affection, God will not be so ; if he forgetteth, God will remember ; if he is ungrateful, God will reward her.

To sum up all, therefore, in the character of a GOOD WIFE. She is one, who, ever mindful of the solemn contract which she has entered into, is strictly and conscientiously virtuous, constant, and faithful to her husband ; chaste, pure, and unblemished in every thought, word, and deed : she is humble and modest from reason and conviction, submissive from choice, and obedient from inclination : what she acquires by love and tenderness, she preserves by prudence and discretion : she makes it her business to serve, and her pleasure to oblige her husband ; as conscious, that every thing, which promotes his happiness, must, in the end, contribute to her own : her tenderness relieves his cares, her affection softens his distress, her good humour and complacency lessen and subdue his afflictions : ‘ she openeth her mouth,’ as Solomon says, ‘ with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law

of kindness : she looketh well to the ways of her husband, and eateth not the bread of idleness : her children rise up and call her blessed : her husband also, and he praiseth her.' Lastly, as a good and pious Christian, she looks up with an eye of gratitude to the Great Dispenser and Disposer of all things, to the Husband of the widow, and Father of the fatherless, intreating his divine favour and assistance in this and every other moral and religious duty ; well satisfied, that if she duly and punctually discharge her several offices and relations in this life, she shall be blessed and rewarded for it in another.

To conclude, therefore, in the words of Solomon, addressed to the good and virtuous wife : *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain ; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.*—*Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed ; neither be thou confounded, for thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name.*

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### HYMN.

THOUGH made by God's almighty hand,  
And in his image form'd,  
Yet Adam knew no happiness,  
Till love his bosom warm'd.



Eden with all its beauteous groves,  
 And fruits of richest taste,  
 To one for social bliss design'd  
 Was but a lonely waste.

But when his lovely bride appear'd  
 In native graces dress'd,  
 The latent spark burst into flame,  
 And love inspir'd his breast.

What wise provision hast thou made,  
 Great Parent of mankind,  
 That all thine offspring may enjoy  
 The bliss for them design'd !

Then will we join our hearts and hands  
 In bonds of virtuous love ;  
 And, whilst we live in peace below,  
 Prepare for bliss above.

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## PRAYER.

O GRACIOUS and eternal God, who hast ordained the conjugal union for the maintenance, good education, and happiness of mankind ! Wilt thou enable me to fulfil the duties of my condition that it may not be the means of my temptation and sin. In all my circumstances may I scrupulously discharge my obligations to thee ; and be just and affec-

tionate, submissive and faithful to my husband. Make me ever willing to respect his judgment and experience, and by complying with his reasonable wishes, may I prevent the beginnings of contention or acrimony. Root out of my heart all evil dispositions ; and may nothing sour the habitual sweetness of my temper, or interrupt the exercise of my good affections. May I avoid not only the reality, but the appearance of pride and haughtiness. May vanity and love of ostentation have no place in my breast. Clothe me with humility, and let my adorning be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in thy sight of great price. Give me prudence and discretion, condescension and forbearance. May I set thee continually before my eyes, and practise all the commandments of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

## DISCOURSE V.

## ON THE DUTY OF PARENTS TO CHILDREN.

EPHES. vi. 4.

*Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

AS all relations are founded on mutual and reciprocal dependencies, and we can have no right to demand where we have never bestowed any thing, it must necessarily follow, that the love, respect, and obedience, which are required of children, are founded on those benefits which they have from time to time received at the hands of their parents, who are thus rewarded for their care and tenderness. As children, therefore, are bound to serve and reverence their parents, parents are also on their part equally obliged to support and provide for their children ; not ‘ to provoke them to wrath’ and disobedience, and then reproach them for it, but the more effectually to secure to themselves honour and respect ; to educate them in such a manner, as to make them ac-



quainted with every part of filial duty ; to ' bring them up' soberly, virtuously, and religiously ; or as the apostle expresses it, ' in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'

Though the affection of the parent towards the child is much stronger and more intense, than that of the child towards the parent, and consequently the breach of duty on one part by no means so frequent as on the other ; such, notwithstanding, is the weakness and depravity of human nature, that children may, as St. Paul hath remarked, be ' provoked,' and justly ' provoked to wrath,' by the faults and follies of their parents, as will more evidently appear, when we come to consider the many errors, weaknesses, and imperfections which we are all liable to, and to point out the principal sources of mutual contempt, hatred, and animosity which make so many families unhappy.

Children may be ' provoked to wrath' by the churlishness and inhumanity of their parents ; by their weakness and indulgence ; by their partiality, their injustice, or their impiety. Permit me to make a few short reflections on every one of them.

1. And first then, Children may be ' provoked to wrath' by the churlishness and inhu-

manity of their parents. It is not in the least to be wondered at, that men of morose and cruel dispositions should 'provoke their children to wrath' by harsh and severe treatment of them; their own home is, perhaps, the only place where they can command without opposition, and tyrannize with impunity; as cowardice and cruelty are inseparable, they will most probably exert their authority where it cannot be disputed, and insult where they cannot be resisted. Parents are every day found amongst us, who shew their power only by the abuse of it; who treat their children as slaves; who, yielding to every impulse of passion and resentment, always rebuke with asperity, and chastise with rigour: but surely such savages are a disgrace to human nature. Youth hath a thousand pleas to urge in its favour, which the deafest ear must listen to: ignorance hath always a claim to pity: and innocence a title to protection. There are very few faults indeed in children which are not pardonable; and half their errors should be attributed to inexperience and inadvertency. Let the severe parent reflect, that if he 'provoke his children to wrath,' he will be himself, in all probability, the greatest sufferer by it; that distance and reservedness must

naturally produce a servile dread and diffidence ; whilst, on the contrary, an open and ingenuous confidence, on one side, would as naturally beget esteem and regard on the other : let him reflect, that though he may be obeyed, he cannot be loved ; that the blow will be felt, though it is not returned : and, that those, who cannot retaliate, will, notwithstanding, resent the injury. Above all, let the severe parent remember, that *he also hath a Father in heaven*, to whom he looks up for love, tenderness, and affection, for pardon, indulgence, and reward ; if He should exercise his parental authority in like manner, and rule his children with *a rod of iron*, if He should be *extreme to mark what is done amiss*, who could abide it ?

2. But, secondly, children may be ‘ provoked to wrath’ by the contrary extreme of weakness and indulgence.

A more dangerous, and certainly a much more frequent error in parents, is an unrestrained and excessive fondness ; and this, however ill calculated it may seem for such a purpose, may, in the end, as justly and inevitably ‘ provoke children to wrath,’ as the opposite extreme of churlishness and severity. The various passions and affections of human



nature begin very early to exert themselves, and, if they are not properly restrained and directed, will of necessity have a fatal and unconquerable influence over the whole tenor of our lives ; if we give up the reins to appetite, at an age, when reason is too weak to guide them, and suffer the will to rule with despotick sway, uncontrolled by judgment and unawed by parental authority, every vice will gain daily strength by habit, and every propensity to evil take such deep root in the soul, as never to be extirpated ; if the child is never corrected, it is most probable that the man will never be virtuous ; and if the child is always complied with, the man will be always unhappy. How often indeed do children live to condemn that fondness, which was the source of their guilt ; and to curse that indulgence, which was the foundation of their misery !

3. But there is another method of ' provoking children to wrath ;' where the resentment on one side is highly warrantable, and the injury on the other to the last degree inexcusable ; and that is, the partial affection of a parent to one child, in preference to others, equally deserving of it ; this is acting in direct opposition both to the will and to the conduct of our Almighty Father, who, in his

dispensations towards man, teacheth us another and a better lesson : the children of nature all divide his tenderness, all share his equal love, without partiality, prejudice, or distinction : we should follow his steps, and imitate his justice. Nothing but a superiour share of duty and obedience, can lay claim to superiour favour and indulgence : no external beauty or form, however striking ; no natural accomplishments, however excellent ; no pre-eminence of genius, talents and abilities, however brilliant and engaging, should have such weight in the scale of parental love, as to destroy that equal balance which should be ever held with a steady and unshaken hand. When this is once lost, the foundations of domestick happiness are undermined ; strife, division, and animosity usurp the seats of harmony and peace ; and where jealousy and hatred are thus early sown, they generally shoot up into a rank and fruitful harvest of guilt and misery. When children find it impossible to please, they will naturally lose all desire of pleasing ; where they are neglected, they will neglect ; and where they are injured, they will resent. These, and a thousand other ill consequences, which it is unnecessary to enumerate, will inevitably flow from the partial distribution of parental tender-

ness : and yet there is scarce a large and numerous family to be met with, where this evil is not in some measure seen, felt, and lamented.

There are, we must acknowledge, strange weaknesses, prejudices and prepossessions in human nature, not easily to be accounted for, which act, no doubt, as forcibly on parents as on other men ; but when we are attacked by them, we must call in reason and religion to our aid, to combat these prejudices, to counteract and subdue these weaknesses and prepossessions : above all, we must remember to place ourselves in the situation of those who are to suffer by them ; to observe the golden rule, the great criterion of justice, and *do as we would be done unto*.

But——

3. There is another method, and which is too often practised by angry and inexorable parents, of ‘provoking children to wrath,’ by unjustly defrauding them of their patrimony, without just cause. *If any provide not for his own, says the apostle, and especially, for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel* : he must, indeed, be strictly and literally worse, more destitute of



feeling and humanity, than the most savage and illiterate barbarians, amongst whom, strangers as they are to God and religion, the crime of deserting and defrauding their offspring is yet unknown. Children have a clear and indisputable right, from the great charter of nature, to the possessions of their parents; and unless that right is forfeited by some flagrant enormity, it cannot with any degree of equity, be wrested from them: the laws of men, in this case, coincide and co-operate with the laws of God; and the claim of inheritance, in all civilized nations, is universally allowed and consented to, unless the contrary is peculiarly specified: those offences, therefore, should be of a very heinous nature, and accompanied with most aggravating circumstances, which can excuse a parent in bereaving his children of their patrimony: no venial inadvertency arising from inexperience, no imprudent sallies of unguarded youth, no unpremeditated acts of casual disobedience can palliate such injustice: for the most part, indeed, scarce any other cause can be assigned for the commission of this crime, but whim, caprice, or resentment: some there are, who screen their guilt beneath the veil of piety, and clothe their vice in the habit of a virtue: but

this is a poor and wretched subterfuge ; the mean evasion of cruelty and pride. The man who deprives his children of their inheritance, and beggars his posterity to soothe his vanity by ill-placed beneficence, though he may be canonized as a saint upon earth, will never be enrolled among the blessed in heaven. It is, upon the whole, an act of injustice which, however the offender may reconcile to himself by specious arguments, however by delusive reasons he may persuade the world to pass over or approve, his conscience will most probably reproach him for in this world, and his Creator punish in that which is to come.

4. There is, moreover, another branch of parental duty, the omission of which must 'provoke children to wrath ;' and that is, not only to bequeath to them their due patrimony, not only to provide for their future ease and happiness, but to promote, by every method in their power, their present and immediate welfare ; to administer to their necessities, and relieve their distress, to double every comfort, and lessen every calamity. The inheritance which we leave our children is no more than a debt which we owe to nature, and which justice demands of us : there is very little merit in parting with that which we can no longer

retain : posthumous charity and generosity, therefore of this, as of every other kind, is of small value or esteem. It often happens, that parents bequeath large estates, after their deaths, to children, whom they had kept in the utmost penury all their lives, and withhold every thing from their family, till the hand of God wrests it from them : and what is generally the consequence of this ? the children are *provoked*, and justly *provoked, to wrath* : the omission of duty on one part produces a neglect of it on the other ; the bonds of mutual affection are gradually loosened and unwoven ; to the warmth of love and tenderness, succeed coldness and indifference ; those, who stand in need of support and assistance, and at the same time think they have a right to it, will be greatly hurt and disappointed, when it is unkindly withheld from them : instead of praying for the continuance of their parents' lives, they are tempted, but too often, to look forwards with secret satisfaction towards the dissolution of it : and where, indeed, there is penury, distress, and resentment on one side, with affluence, avarice, and inhumanity on the other, all the aid, which filial affection, morality, and religion can afford, will sometimes prove ineffectual. If parents, therefore, hope for love,



tenderness, and obedience from their children, they must, as long as they live, in proportion to their circumstances and abilities, assist, support, and relieve them ; we must love, in short, if we expect to be loved ; we must give pleasure and satisfaction, if we expect to receive them ; we must look up, in this, as in every other point of duty, to the great standard of perfection, the tender, affectionate, universal Parent, the Creator and Father of mankind : *He* deals forth his bounties to all his children, with a liberal and impartial hand ; directs them by his councils, guards them by his providence, and supports them by his power ; guides, instructs, and assists them here, and encourages them in the practice of duty and obedience, by the unalienable reversion of a noble inheritance hereafter.

But lastly : Parents may *provoke their children to wrath*, by their own wicked and licentious lives ; not only by a neglect and disregard of *them*, but by the little attention which they pay to *themselves*, and to their own character and reputation in the world. As parents frequently suffer for the follies of their children, so may children also suffer for the follies of their parents : it becometh all men to act with pru-

dence and discretion ; to behave soberly and religiously, and to abstain from every evil word and work ; but, it is peculiarly incumbent on every father and mother, to keep a *conscience void of offence* ; to put a bridle on their lips and place a guard over their hearts : the solemn relation which they have entered into, the important office which they are bound to perform, demand a more than ordinary care of their conduct in every particular. The minds of children are so susceptible of every impression ; so entirely guided by the direction, and influenced by the example of those who are immediately connected with them, that no caution can be too great, no restraint too rigid and severe, with regard to every thing done and said within their presence or within the sphere of their knowledge and comprehension. There is a reverence due to youth, as well as age : not an action should be committed before children, which hath the least tendency towards sin ; not a word should escape our lips, that might taint the purity of unsullied innocence. How much, then, has the guilty parent to answer for, who, instead of setting a fair example to his children, and directing them in the paths of truth and happiness, misleads their unwary footsteps into

the paths of sin and sorrow ; who debauches those morals, which he ought to improve, and subjects those to the divine wrath, whom it is his indispensable duty to shelter from it !

Though many other causes, arising from particular incidents in life, or from the different tempers and dispositions of men, may occasionally conspire to disturb the peace of families, by ‘ provoking children to wrath,’ those which I have already mentioned will generally be found the most prevalent : the best method to guard against such weaknesses, and to prevent the ill consequences of them, is, probably, that rule of conduct, which the apostle hath prescribed in the latter part of my text, admonishing parents, to *bring up their children in the nurture of the Lord.*

St. Paul, who well knew how much depends on a virtuous and religious education, recommends it as the great and leading duty, including, as it were, and comprehending every other : he indeed, who regularly and conscientiously performs this, will not often be found deficient in any of the rest : it is scarce probable, that he who knows and teaches the principles of Christianity, should himself act so directly in opposition to them, as to ‘ provoke his children to wrath,’ by any of those



errours which I have above enumerated. It is not in the power of every man to provide for his children, with regard to the good things of this life, in the manner he could wish, or they, perhaps, deserve; his own circumstances may be too narrow to make theirs easy; his own interest, merit, or abilities too small and inconsiderable, to recommend them to powerful favour and protection; but, it is in every man's power to 'bring up his children in the fear of the Lord,' to form their minds to the practice of virtue, and instil into them, as early as possible, the principles of religion and morality.

This is a duty which, I fear, is too often neglected amongst us. The knowledge of languages, of arts and sciences, is universally taught and inculcated with the utmost pains and assiduity; whilst the noblest science of all, that of Morality, the best and most useful knowledge, the knowledge of ourselves, is seldom enquired into. Care is taken to fill the garden with every flower that can beautify or adorn, but scarce one useful fruit, or salutary herb, is planted in it: Children, in short, are taught every language, but the language of the heart; instructed in every religion, but the religion of Christ; and acquainted with every book, but the holy scriptures.

Piety strengthens the bonds of filial, as well as of every other duty : those children, therefore, will always be the most obedient, tender and affectionate, who act from conscientious and religious principles. Those, who have been ‘ brought up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord,’ will most probably repay their parents’ care and attention, by love and gratitude towards them : it is therefore the father’s highest interest, as well as his indispensable duty, to instruct his children in religion ; to acquaint them with the ways of God, to explain the doctrine of Christ, and the terms of salvation : as all the pains he takes in this task, will be amply recompensed : and the gift, which he bestows, be *returned fourfold into his own bosom.*

To conclude, therefore, with the character of A GOOD FATHER.

The *good father* is ever humane, tender and affectionate to his children ; he treats them, therefore, with lenity, and kindness ; corrects with prudence, rebukes with temper, and chastises with reluctance : he never suffers his indulgence to degenerate into weakness, or his affection to be biassed by partiality : as he rejoices in their joy, and participates in their afflictions, he never suffers them to want

a blessing which he can bestow, or to lament an evil which he can prevent : whilst he continueth with them, he administers to their present happiness, and provides for their future felicity when he shall be removed from them ; he is doubly cautious in preserving his own character, because theirs depends upon it ; he is prudent, therefore, that they may be happy, industrious that they may be rich ; good and virtuous, that they may be respected : he instructs by his life, and teaches by his example : as he is thoroughly satisfied, that piety is the source and foundation of every virtue, he takes care to ‘ bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord :’ that they may be good *men*, he endeavours to make them good *Christians* ; and after having done every thing in his power to make them easy and happy here, points out to them the only infallible means of securing eternal bliss and tranquillity hereafter.



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HYMN.

BLEST is the man who fears the Lord,  
And walks by his unerring word ;  
Comfort and peace his days attend,  
And God will ever prove his friend.

To Him, who condescends to dwell  
With saints in their obscurest cell,  
Be our domestick altars rais'd,  
And daily let his name be prais'd.

To Him may each assembled house  
Present their night and morning vows ;  
Their servants and their rising race  
Be taught his precepts and his grace.

Then shall the charms of wedded love  
Still more delightful blessings prove ;  
And parents' hearts shall overflow  
With joys that parents only know.

When nature droops, our aged eyes  
Shall see our children's children rise ;  
Till pleas'd and thankful we remove,  
And join the family above.

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PRAYER.

O THOU God of all the families of the  
earth ! Wilt thou be the God of my family.

Teach me to rule it in the spirit of wisdom, power, and gentleness. Give me clear views of the duty I owe to my children. May I feel my responsibility to thee and to society for the manner in which I shall execute my important trust. Suffer me not to provoke them to wrath ; but may I bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Help me carefully to watch their tempers, and religiously to oppose their earliest inclinations to irreligion and vice. Save me as well from churlishness and inhumanity, as from weakness and indulgence. Enable me to hold the reins of parental government with a steady hand. Make me reasonable in my commands, and discreet in the manner of giving them. May I tolerate in my children no sort nor degree of wickedness. Give me grace to exercise over them a proper authority, and by a regular and wholesome discipline to correct their faults, strengthen their minds, and improve their morals. Above all, may I go before them in the light of a good example : assist me to walk in my house with a perfect heart, and to teach my offspring, both by conduct and lesson, to keep the commandments of their God. O that they might live before thee ! I ask, in submission to thy will, that

thou wouldst grant them health and length of days, competence and reputation ; but it is the far more fervent desire of my heart, that they may have that wisdom which is grey hair to a man, and that unspotted life which is old age. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, may they live soberly, righteously, and piously in this evil world, that they may hereafter be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting, through Jesus my Lord. Amen.



## DISCOURSE VI.

## ON THE DUTY OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS.

EPHES. vi. 2, 3.

*Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

AS this duty is the first we are capable of practising, and which as soon as we have the least dawn of reason we are called upon to perform, it is very fitly placed at the head of the second table in the decalogue, and deserves very seriously and attentively to be considered ; because on this the others do immediately and necessarily depend.

All those philosophers who have most curiously explored the goodness of the Almighty in the animal creation, have concurred in observing that the instinctive tenderness of creatures towards their young is a worthy example for the best of parents, and a severe,

though silent, reproach of the bad amongst us ; but strong as this natural affection is in every class of irrational beings, it remains no longer than whilst it is absolutely necessary to the propagation and support of the species : the connexion on each side is soon lost, another love succeeds, another race rises up to enjoy it ; but man is graciously distinguished by his Maker, in this, as in every other particular, and maintains his sovereignty over the creation ; he is endued with faculties to be sensible of, and with power to repay the benefit ; the care and tenderness of the parent, the love and gratitude of the child, are constant and permanent, and the mutual exchange of affection carried on from the earliest dawn of life even to the latest period of it.

In man indeed, as in every other creature, the love implanted in the breast of the parent towards the offspring is much more intense than that implanted in the child towards its parent. And herein the providence of God is immediately visible, and the reason sufficiently obvious ; the child, we know, is helpless and destitute, and without that care and tenderness must inevitably perish ; whereas the parent may subsist (though not with an equal share

of comfort and satisfaction) without the return of filial duty.

But this, as well as every other reason, would be a poor plea for the omission, or rather perhaps, to every grateful and ingenuous mind, would be a stronger inducement to the performance of it.

But that no plea or excuse whatever can indeed be admitted, will be sufficiently evident, when we come to consider, in the subsequent discourse, the various parts of this duty, together with our necessary and indispensable obligations to the practice of it.

‘Honour thy father and mother, (says the apostle) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.’

By *honour*, in the more strict and confined sense of the word, is understood no more than that deference and respect, which is due from inferiour to superiour, varying according to the various ties and relations, the several circumstances and conditions of human life; exclusive of parental authority, it is the accustomed tribute of youth to age and experience, in grateful return for the benefits of its advice, and the influence of its example; and this doubtless is a part, and no inconsiderable one, of the duty here enjoined.



The highest deference, respect, and submission, should be shewn to parents, because they are, next to God, the most proper objects of them. 'Cursed be he, (says the law of Moses,) that setteth light by his father or mother : ' where no respect is paid to the person, we can hardly expect obedience to his commands, and we have seldom any great love or esteem for those whom we treat with levity and contempt.

When we consider that the pains and afflictions which attend the latter part of our lives are so many and so great, the advantages and privileges of age so few and inconsiderable, we cannot, without the utmost inhumanity, abridge it of the least of them : And yet this branch of filial duty is very often shaken off, and very frequently neglected, and particularly by those who are a little advanced in life, who, as soon as they begin to receive respect and deference themselves, forget to pay it where it is due, and even whilst they enjoy the good effects of parental instruction, are regardless of those to whom they are originally indebted for it.

The greater the obligations are, which we have at any time laid on others, the better

treatment do we of course expect in return, and with the greater degree of warmth do we resent any injury or contempt from them ; the slightest wound gives the most exquisite pain, when inflicted by the hand we love. What then must the parent feel, who, instead of reciprocal tenderness and affection, instead of that submissive deference, which he has a right to expect, meets with surliness and pride, with a contemptuous disregard of him, from a thankless child ? Even expressions of civility, even that complaisance and good-breeding, which to others may appear amiable, in his eyes will seem cold and disrespectful. How can we persuade ourselves to fill that heart with anguish and disquietude, which is so solicitous for our welfare ; or give a moment's uneasiness to those, who spend their lives in providing for our wants, defending us from danger, and promoting our joy and happiness !

But, besides this deference and respect, these outward marks of esteem, there is something more required : *the sincerest testimony of filial affection* (and which must doubtless be included in the precept of my text) *is obedience*. To 'honour our parents' is, to obey them, to submit implicitly to their or-

ders, and dutifully to perform whatever is enjoined by them.

And here (as in almost every duty) our Saviour himself hath condescended to be a guide and example to us. The sons of men need not err, for the Son of God hath pointed out to them the measure of their obedience : He submitted to the commands of his Almighty Father, and obeyed them cheerfully, without reproach, murmur, or reluctance ; he incurred the most painful sufferings, with patience and content ; even in the hour of death, he petitions with humility, but submits with resignation ; ‘ Father, if it please thee, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.’

Where there is absolute and total dependence on one side, there should be total and absolute submission on the other ; here, then, a title to obedience is already established, and it is as vain as it is ungrateful to dispute it : resistance can be of no effect, there is therefore, in the rebellion of children, as much folly as wickedness.

But, moreover, that which is the indispensable duty of children is also their real and truest interest ; it is the peculiar and distinguishing advantage of parental power, that the



interest of him who lays the command, and of him who performs it, is for the most part plainly, and indisputably, the same. The magistrate may, and perhaps frequently doth, compel his inferiour to actions highly disgusting, and sometimes extremely pernicious to him, because he has a secret view to his own advancement ; the general may force his soldiers to rush on danger and death to promote his glory ; and the despotick tyrant may sacrifice millions of his subjects to his own pride and ambition : But the father has no private interest to promote in opposition to his children, no ambition but to make them amiable, no views but to make them happy ; here then there can be no doubt or jealousy ; the relation they stand in, exempts them from the least suspicion of fraud or treachery ; and, in a world where there is scarce any thing else, how inestimable is such sincerity !

So agreeable to the law of nature and reason is this important duty, as to be held even by the unenlightened heathens in the highest esteem and veneration. “ He that is undutiful to his “ parents (says the Athenian law) shall be incapable of holding any office.” Amongst the Romans also, if a father came to want, and the son, if able, did not relieve him, he was sen-

tenced by the laws against ingratitude to be the father's slave for life. The wise and pious rulers in those times were doubtless of opinion, that no obligations could influence, no ties could bind the man who had broken through the bonds of nature ; that the love of his country could never reside in *that* breast which was void of filial affection ; that, where the father's authority was slighted, the magistrates would be but ill submitted to ; and that *he*, in short, must be very unfit to *rule*, who had never learned to *obey*.

But further :

By *honouring* our parents is undoubtedly meant the giving them all the assistance, support, and defence, which they may at any time stand in need of.

Such are the vicissitudes of human life, that it is no strange or uncommon circumstance, to see penury or distress usurp the seats of joy and plenty ; to see those who had flourished in the earlier parts of life in affluence and prosperity, reduced at the close of it to want and misery, obliged to struggle with the world at an age when they are most unfit to encounter it, and, instead of resting in peace after a troublesome journey, compelled to bear the heat and burden of the day. Here, then,

filial duty hath the noblest opportunity of exerting its gratitude : all that a child can do, is no more than what he is strictly bound to do ; and no danger is so great, but in such a case he should readily go through it ; no toil so severe, but he should most willingly bear it.

A numerous family has often sunk those, who, without it, might have lived in the utmost splendour ; to the weight of its branches the tree may owe its decay : here the obligation receives new force ; to relieve the wants we ourselves have caused, is but common justice ; to heal the wounds, which our own hands have made, is but common humanity.

Age, we know, has always a melancholy attendance. Infirmities vex, diseases torment, and death affrights it ; health scarce enlivens, sickness totally depresses it ; it calls for the compassion, therefore, and assistance of all ; from man to man, it implores them as favours ; from the parent to his children it demands them as a debt ; the greatest indeed which we can contract, and the first we are bound to discharge : ‘ My son,’ says the wise man, ‘ help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth, and if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength ;



for the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten, it shall be added to build thee up, in the day of affliction it shall be remembered.'

But—

Another method of *honouring* our parents is, to have such a regard to our own character and reputation in the world, as never, if possible, to be guilty of any action which may reflect shame or disgrace upon them. The consequences of vice are seldom indeed confined to the person of the offender ; they reach much further, and affect others as well as ourselves. The malice and ill-nature of mankind is always ready enough to attribute the follies of children to the negligence, or example of their parents. What shall we say then to those, who, instead of imparting joy and satisfaction to the virtuous parent, repay their cares and tenderness with ignominy and disgrace ; who, instead of adding dignity to their age and weight to their authority, by a licentious and abandoned life load their hearts with sorrow, increase the burthen of their years, and 'bring their grey hairs in sorrow to the grave ?'

To *honour* our parents then is, *first*, to shew respect and deference to them in all our words and actions : *secondly*, readily and im-

plicitly to hearken to their precepts, and obey their commands ; and *lastly*, to support, defend, and relieve them : to support those who have defended us, to relieve those who have relieved us. ‘ Honour thy father with thy whole heart,’ says the son of Sirach, ‘ and forget not the sorrows of thy mother ; remember thou wast begot of them, and how canst thou recompense them the things which they have done for thee ?’

The obligation indeed is not easily recompensed, because it is not easily known ; true generosity always enhances the value of the gift by concealment : innumerable instances of paternal tenderness pass over, and are forgotten, and thousands are never seen.

‘ The father, (says the wise man,) waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care for her taketh away sleep :’ to be supported when we are unable to support ourselves, to be defended from the world at a time when we have not power to contend with it, to receive not only present maintenance, but to have our future joy and happiness provided for, are surely benefits which call for the highest and sincerest acknowledgments : but the true value of this blessing, like most others, is perhaps scarce ever perceived till it

is lost ; whilst we revel at the feast, we forget the master of it, and seldom know the true merit of paternal affection, till we feel the want of it.

Look round upon the ignorant and illiterate, the poor and destitute, the vicious and abandoned part of mankind ; inquire into the causes of this depravity, the source of their indigence, the reasons of their ignorance, and you will most generally find, that these unhappy wretches are orphans ; such as had no parents to instruct or provide for them, a wandering flock who had no guide to direct them, 'no shepherd to feed them in green pastures,' or 'lead them beside the waters of comfort.'

Let the reflection on their unhappy circumstances sink deep into the souls of those who have escaped them ; let us view the storm at a distance, and bless the pilot who saved us from it ; let those who have enjoyed, who have been blest with the life of their parents, be truly thankful for the benefit, and by repaying, shew that they deserve it. But there is also another inducement to the practice of this virtue, which may possibly have some influence upon us, and that is, the hope



of ourselves receiving the benefit of it. We must pay that duty as children, which as parents we may hereafter expect to be paid to us.

‘By the same that a man sinneth, (says the scripture,) by the same also shall he be punished :’ the undutiful child will most probably be an unhappy father, the poisoned cup shall return to his own lips, he shall meet with that disobedience from his children which he had himself been guilty of, and shall want that duty and respect which he refused to pay.

The last incitement to the practice of this duty which I shall now mention, is, that most persuasive one subjoined in the text : ‘ Honour thy father and mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.’

It is observable, that the command to *honour* our parents is, as St. Paul remarked, ‘ the first commandment with promise :’ Thus doth religion, which in the language of holy writ, is always styled *wisdom*, provide for those who ‘ walk in her ways ; length of days is in her right hand, and in her left riches and honours.’ ‘ Honour thy father, and thy mother, that thou mayest live long on the earth :’ that is, if by an obedient and dutiful beha-

viour to thy parents, thou dost prolong their life, and contribute to their health and happiness, thou shalt thyself be rewarded with the same blessings. God, we see, doth so peculiarly delight in the execution of this duty, that he hath promised even to suspend, for a time, the laws of nature in favour of those who comply with it ; as if the Divine Being were himself unwilling to interrupt us in the performance of an office so grateful to him.

If, then, we expect to live a long and happy life, let us be careful, as many of us are able, to deserve it. Not all, indeed, have it in their power. Death sometimes cancels the debt, before those who have contracted can possibly discharge it ; in the first dawn of life, in that part of our existence when we first receive the benefit, we are not sufficiently sensible of it ; and when we become so, it frequently happens, that it is too late to shew our acknowledgments of it. As soon as men, therefore, arrive at an age when they can thoroughly feel the good effects of their parents' care ; and can reflect, as they ought, on all their past acts of goodness and tenderness towards them, then, and then alone, they have it in their power to make some return for it. It is their duty, then, to lay hold on the glo-

rious opportunity. Few parents live long enough to receive from their children that rational and sincere obedience which they have merited from them. They sow early and reap late ; and therefore, doubtless, more abundant should be the harvest.

To conclude, therefore, with a short character of A GOOD SON.

The *good* and dutiful *Son*, then, is one who *honoureth* his parents, by paying them the utmost deference and respect ; by a reverential awe and veneration for them ; a filial affection for their persons, and a tender regard for their safety and preservation ; a constant and cheerful attendance to their advice, and a ready and implicit obedience to their commands. As he becometh every day more sensible of his obligations to them, he grows every day more willing and more solicitous to repay them. He employs his youth to support their age ; his abundance to relieve their wants ; his knowledge and strength, to supply their infirmities and decay. He is more careful of his character and reputation in the world, because theirs depends upon it. Ever anxious of their welfare, and attentive to their happiness, he endeavours, by every method in his power, to prolong *their* days,



that his 'own may be long in the land.' He rests assured, that God will not only bless obedient children here, but will reward them with the blessing of heaven, where it shall be *well with him* for ever ; where we shall all join, son and father, daughter and mother, wife and husband, servant and master ; all the relations and connexions of this life, to honour one great Parent, Protector, Lord, and Master of us all.

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### HYMN.

APPROACH, ye piously dispos'd,  
And my instruction hear ;  
I'll teach you the true discipline  
Of God's religious fear.

Let children who would fear the Lord,  
Hear what their teachers say ;  
With rev'rence meet their parents' word,  
And with delight obey.

Have you not heard what dreadful plagues  
Are threaten'd by the Lord,  
To him, who breaks his father's law,  
Or mocks his mother's word ?

What heavy guilt upon him lies !

How cursed is his name !

The ravens shall pick out his eyes,

And eagles eat the same.

But those, who worship God, and give

Their parents honour due,

Here on this earth they long shall live,

And live hereafter too.

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## PRAYER.

O MY father, who art in heaven ! Thou art my God, and I will praise thee ; thou art my father's God, and I will exalt thy name. Every day will I bless thee, because thou art the guide of my youth : I will acknowledge thee in all my ways, that thou mayest direct my paths for me. Imprint, I beseech thee, thy fear in my heart ; and under the influence of this heavenly principle, may I rightly perform the duties, which I owe to thee and mankind. Especially may I obey the command which thou hast given me to honour my father and my mother. Help me to consider, that this holy precept is everlastingly right and fit, and that it is founded in the nature and constitution of things. May I see

that my parents hold the power, which thou hast given them over me, by the consent of all mankind ; and wilt thou convince me of the folly, as well as impiety, of attempting to resist their rightful authority. From inclination, as well as duty, may I hearken to the instruction of my father, and forsake not the law of my mother. Under the full conviction that they are ever consulting my good, may every act of obedience to them be easy and pleasant. Not from constraint, but with a ready mind, may I reverence their persons and their characters. Dispose me to pay a sober and diligent regard to their counsels in religion and morals, and in all the important concerns of my life. And may I find the reward of my obedience in the satisfactions of my own mind, in the hope of thine approbation, and in the extended life and usefulness of my parents. May it please thee to prolong to themselves and to me their valuable lives. May they live to a good old age ; and may I be so happy as to contribute, by my filial tenderness and assiduities, to render their last days comfortable : may they be gathered to the sepulchres of their fathers in peace, and have a part in the resurrection of the just. I address myself to



thee, O holy and eternal God, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, beseeching thee to hear my requests, to forgive my sins, to enlighten my understanding, and to sanctify and save my soul, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

## DISCOURSE VII.

## ON THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN TO EACH OTHER

GEN. xlv. 24.

*See that ye fall not out by the way.*

IT has been remarked by acute observers of human nature, that discourses, addressed to particular classes of persons, have made a deeper impression, and produced a happier effect, than subjects of a general sort. Believing the truth of this observation, I have already exercised your minds on the duties of aged men and aged women ; on the duties of husbands to wives, and of wives to husbands ; and on those of parents to children, and of children to parents. If it shall be thought, that to illustrate and enforce these relative duties, naturally leads to a closer strain of instruction, than is pleasant or desirable, let it be remembered, that profit, not amusement, is the

object of religious counsels. Let it be considered that, after using all the means which the spirit of God has dictated, and every art which honest ingenuity can suggest, the duties of man to man, and of man to his Maker, will be imperfectly understood, and still more imperfectly practised. Let us, therefore, with candour and docility seek the knowledge of our duty in the several stations, in which Providence hath placed us ; and be solicitous that these stations should be filled with comfort to ourselves, to the honour of our connexions, and the approbation of God.

At present I charge myself with the task of recommending the benefits of domestick peace ; and the reciprocal duties of brothers and sisters.

For this purpose I have chosen as a text the advice of Joseph to his brothers, when about to return to their father from their journey to Egypt. *See that ye fall not out by the way.* But I will give you a sketch of the history with which the words are connected.

You know, my young readers, that the brethren of Joseph had formerly hated and unkindly used him, and sold him into Egypt. But Joseph harboured in his bosom no sentiment of enmity or revenge. If the fond par-



tiality of an aged parent was suited to cherish a degree of youthful vanity, it had no mixture of malice. His heart and countenance were open as day, and his breast was full of pious and benevolent feelings. He carried with him into slavery the excellent principles of his education. He preserved his innocence amidst the strongest temptations. He was faithful to his master, diligent in his business, prompt and persevering in whatever he undertook, and by the sweetness of his temper and the affability of his manners secured the esteem and confidence of all who knew him. Such virtue was a spectacle of delight to angels, and even God himself, who notices and rewards the goodness of his human offspring. Under the conduct of Providence, the young Hebrew prisoner became, next to the king, the most powerful man in the land of Egypt.

Whilst Joseph was thus in authority, the famine which he had previously foretold, actually happened. It extended to the land of Canaan, where Jacob and his sons still lived; and they were suffering for want of bread. But Joseph had been so wise in the time of plenty as to provide for this season of dearth. His father heard of the abundance in Egypt, and thither sent all his sons, except the young-

est to buy corn for their families. Joseph instantly knew his brethren, though they had no recollection of him. He at first imprisoned them for their punishment, and afterwards released them. He detained Simeon as the means of bringing them to see him again with Benjamin his brother. And after very justly testing their patience and honesty, he acknowledged himself to be their brother, whom they had long since sold and abandoned. They were surprised and afraid at this unexpected discovery. Joseph, however, forgave them their crime, embraced and blessed them, loaded them with provisions and presents for good old Jacob, and sent them away with this valuable advice, *See that ye fall not out by the way.* He is hence to be understood as cautioning them against indulging to contentions among themselves, as had sometimes been the case, and as now might happen. Each might upbraid the other with promoting the calamities of Joseph, and thus of being instrumental of evils, which Joseph might afterward inflict. He would have them lay aside these unpleasant surmises, and travel home together in unity and peace.

And this unity and peace, my young

friends, is what I would now recommend to you by five considerations.

Consider, in the first place, that you are brethren. This is a powerful argument against strife, and in favour of mutual forbearance. You are brethren, because you are alike the offspring of God. You have all one father even God. In this sense, indeed, you are brethren and sisters to the whole family of mankind : and this fact should be a motive with you to cultivate a general good-will. How much better is it to consider ourselves as members, than as aliens, of the human race ! How much happier to feel ourselves in a world of friends, than in a world of enemies ! If then the consideration of your having sprung from the same heavenly origin, and your partaking of the same nature should lead you to habits of universal philanthropy, how much stronger is the reason for your living in amity with those, who are your brethren in the strictest sense ! You have not only the same father in heaven, but you have the same parents on earth. You have the same kindred and connexions. You are fed at the same table ; are lodged beneath the same roof ; and clothed by the same hands. Your means of education and



religion are the same. Related to each other by so many tender ties, you have every sort of inducement to dwell peaceably together. A motive to brotherly love was once finely urged by Abram towards Lot, when a quarrel was about to arise concerning their respective interests. 'And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between thy herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thou thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.' An amiable example this of condescension and kindness! 'Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!'

But it is not only amiable and pleasant; it is also very important that brethren should dwell together in unity. If our partners in business abuse our kindness, we can perhaps find a recompense in forming new connexions. If our companions in the walks of learning or amusement prove false, dissocial, and oppressive, we can easily abandon their company, and take a different path. But the bonds of nature are not for trivial reasons to be burst

asunder. The wounds which are given to domestick peace are not to be contemned nor neglected: they must be soothed by the voice of reconciliation; and healed by offices of tenderness and love.

Secondly. You ought to live harmoniously together, because you belong to the family of Jesus Christ. You were baptized into his name. You are instructed in the principles of his religion. In his name you are taught to call on the universal father. Now the gospel of Jesus is a system of benevolence. Our blessed redeemer came to bring peace upon earth, and good will among men. He was himself an example of filial respect and fraternal affection. All the kind, pacifick, and beneficent dispositions warmed his heart, and shone in his actions. He condemned by his words and conduct a quarrelsome and contentious temper, saying 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.' On the contrary he cherished a quiet spirit in whomever it appeared, and pronounced the best of his benedictions on the lovers and promoters of peace. 'Have peace,' said he, 'one with another. A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one

another, as I have loved you, that ye love one another.'

Now Jesus Christ by his coming into the world, by his lessons of benevolence, by his works of mercy, and by his sufferings and death, has given the strongest testimony of his love for you. In like manner testify your love for one another by acts of gentleness and beneficence. Exert your powers, as the saviour exercised his, not for your own advantage merely, but for that of those to whom you are allied. It is thus you are to imbibe the spirit of Christ. It is thus that you are to bear his yoke, and to carry his cross. Whilst therefore you are inoffensive, generous, and useful in your deportment to all whom you meet, be particularly careful to live in love with those, to whom God has united you by the bands of nature. There is nothing narrow in this christian advice. As you must first learn to show obedience at home, so at home must you first learn to exercise and expand your social affections.

Thirdly. You must mutually forgive each other offences, because you hope God will forgive your trespasses against him. In families, as well as in the world, offences will come. But they commonly go, as soon as



they come, where a spirit of forgiveness is duly cultivated. It is the want of this spirit which perpetuates domestick quarrels. We often offend a brother through haste or imprudence, and often unintentionally injure his feelings. But where the temper of brotherly love predominates, these offences will be forgiven, and these injuries forgotten. Consider how often we offend against the God of benevolence. How frequently have we broken his commands ; how frequently omitted the duties which he has enjoined ! How dreadful would be our condition, if the God, whom we worship, was an inexorable judge ! But let it be considered that he has made our forgiveness of each other the condition of his forgiveness of us. Harken to the words of our sacred master. ‘ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you ; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father in heaven forgive your trespasses.’ If this argument has any force in mitigating the fury of resentment and the ferocity of contention among men of the world, it has tenfold weight in softening the anger excited among the members of the same household. Endeavour, therefore, my beloved young friends, to observe the infirmi-

ties and failings of one another without dislike, at least without harbouring a spirit of petulance and rancour. If you reprove the offence, still pardon and love the offender. So shall you be called the children of the Highest, who 'beareth long with the sins of men that they should amend; who hateth nothing that he has made, but loveth and cherisheth it.'

Fourthly. Cherish a spirit of domestick harmony as the means of securing the esteem of your parents and friends. The fifth commandment is eminently a commandment of promise. There is no duty in the scriptures so plainly enjoined as that of honour, obedience, and gratitude from children to parents. There is none which has so firm a foundation in the nature and fitness of things. It is they who by the providence of God brought you into the world, and who watched with tenderness your helpless years. In sickness they nursed you, and in health they provided for your nourishment and comfort. They are still anxiously caring for your bodily and mental improvement, and your future prosperity is among the dearest wishes of their hearts. 'The father,' says the wise man, 'waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care for her taketh away sleep.' Do not such

parental anxieties demand a return of grateful acknowledgment, and filial recompense? In what way can you make them happier, than by cultivating among yourselves the benevolent affections, and an inviolable friendship? How can you more effectually honour the commands of your parents, and the commands of heaven, than by dwelling together as children of the God of love? It is then you gladden their hearts, when yours are the abodes of peace. It is then that they taste the value of domestick bliss. It is then they offer up their thankful oraisons to the God of all the families of the earth, that he has made them the joyful parents of amiable children. Yes, children, it is not the crowded and brilliant circle, it is not the pomp and diversions of life that swell your parents' bosoms with the purest pleasure; but then do they account themselves most truly blessed, when they behold you increasing in goodness as you increase in stature, and when, in addition to the strength and proportion of your persons, you exhibit the promise of benevolence, talents, and usefulness.

Lastly. *See that ye fall not out by the way*, because you will need each others counsel and assistance on the road. Joseph gave



the advice in the text to his brothers, when going their journey from Egypt to Canaan. The same advice I offer to you, who are going a journey from the Egypt of this world to the Canaan above. You have all been travelling out of the world ever since you have been travelling in it. You ought to be journeying to a world, which is infinitely better. The way to heaven lies through the earth. And the way through this world, the way you have begun to travel, is crooked, dark, and dangerous. It is a way, in which you will oft be puzzled with mazes, and perplexed with errors. Your understandings will sometimes search in vain for the right path, and when you have found it, your tardy, sluggish feet will be unwilling to maintain the pursuit. It is a way in which you will meet difficulties and enemies, and in which you will sometimes be lost and know not where and how to turn yourselves. In this way, so full of uncertainty and perils, you will want the supports and friendship of those, whom nature and habit have bound most closely to your hearts. Especially will you feel this want, if God should deprive you of either or both of your parents before you have reached the meridian of life. Whether your occupa-

tions are similar or unlike, let your hearts be one in affection and designs to please. Of what nature soever are your amusements, let innocence, good humour, and agreement be always of the party. Therefore let it not be your fault, if any of your *foes shall be those of your own household*. Whilst you dwell together, dwell in peace, that the God of peace may cement and prolong the union. Be acquainted with the happiness of brotherly love, not by description merely, but by experience. Whether your father's house be the seat of wealth and splendour, or an humble tenement, let it always be the abode of unity and love. Every state brings along with it its cares as well as pleasures. Nothing will flourish without labour and cultivation. If we would eat the fruit of our orchards, and have our gardens blooming and fragrant, we must dress and keep them with care and diligence. So if you would reap the fruits, you must sow the seeds of domestick felicity. Remember that domestick friendship, any more than affliction, does not spring from the ground, and that if you would know the satisfactions, you must fulfil the duties of brotherly kindness. With these affectionate counsels I end my discourse. And may the God and father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, the author of concord, incline your hearts to walk in love, and direct your steps in the way of peace.

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### HYMN.

If brawls disturb the street,  
There should be peace at home ;  
Where sisters dwell and brothers meet,  
Quarrels should never come.

The wise their anger cool,  
At least before 'tis night ;  
But in the bosom of a fool  
It burns till morning light.

Blest are the sons of peace,  
Whose hearts and hopes are one ;  
Whose kind designs to serve and please,  
Through all their actions run !

Blest is the pious house,  
Where zeal and friendship meet ;  
Their songs of praise, their mingled vows  
Make their communion sweet.

Thus on the heavenly hills  
The saints are blest above ;  
Where peace like morning dew distils,  
And all the air is love.



## PRAYER.

O THOU, who hast made me a mortal and an immortal being ! I thank thee, that thou hast called me into life, and hast surrounded me with so many blessings. Praised be thy name for having caused me to be born in a christian land, and of christian parents, who dedicated me to thee in infancy, and have since instructed me in christian principles. I thank thee that I do not find myself alone and friendless in the world. I gratefully acknowledge thy goodness in blessing me with various friends and relatives, who have often counselled and assisted me, and are still desirous of promoting my welfare. Especially do I thank thee, O my heavenly father, for having favoured me with [brothers] [and] [sisters], to whom I am nearly and tenderly allied both by nature and friendship. Give me grace, I entreat thee, to love them with a warm and steady affection. May we know by happy experience how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Incline us to provoke one another to love and good works. May no root of bitterness, springing up, trouble us ; but may

an interchange of beneficent acts make a part of our daily business. Enable me to contribute largely to this mutual forbearance and brotherly love. Suffer me in no instance needlessly to grieve, or wilfully to offend those whom thou hast thus closely united with me. Withhold me from sullen reserve, from moroseness of temper, and hardness of heart. Rid me of cold and selfish feelings, and inspire me with a generous sympathy. May I weep with them in their misfortunes, help them in their difficulties, and rejoice in their prosperity. Wilt thou keep my heart and my tongue, O thou preserver of men, from evil designs and improper language. Write the law of charity on my soul in new and everlasting lines. And having been a devout worshipper of thee, a faithful servant of Christ, and a lover of my brethren, and of all mankind, wilt thou at last receive me to the holy and happy society above, even to the general assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect. I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

## DISCOURSE VIII.

## ON THE DUTIES OF SUPERIOURS.

## COLOSSIANS iv. 1.

*Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal ; knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.*

‘IF,’ says St. James, ‘ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin :’ and, surely, nothing can be more inconsistent with the office of a minister, and with the spirit of the gospel which he preaches, than a partiality to the persons and stations of men. For as he serves that God, ‘who, without respect of persons, judgeth every man’s work,’ so, without regard of rank or station, he should teach every man his duty, ‘without preferring one before another, doing nothing with partiality.’

Happy would it be for the world, if they to whom God, in his Providence, gives pow-



or and authority over other men, would remember from whom these privileges came... for what purpose they were given... what account must be rendered of them; and, above all, if they would endeavour, in the exercise and application of them, to imitate the example of the Giver!

Some masters conceal the heaviest and most mortifying parts of the work they expect, and amuse the servants they would engage, with fair and general promises which they never mean to fulfil, with exaggerated accounts of their perquisites, and flattering pictures of the condition in which they are to live; a piece of ill-timed policy, at once cruel, unjust, and unwise. Unjust, because in this, as well as in every other contract, we should deal with sincerity and candour, not imposing upon the ignorance, nor taking advantage of the simplicity and credulity of the persons with whom we have to do, but fairly informing them of what service we mean to exact, expressly and candidly determining the reward we are willing to allow, and repeating the terms of the contract with all possible precision, until we find that they understand us, and are satisfied, or decline acceptance of the conditions. Dissimulation, in cases of this

nature, must be very criminal; because, in many things, the servant must confide in the veracity of the master, and judge of his intended state and condition by his report. It is also unwise, with respect to a man's own interest: for when the servant discovers the imposition, he has no more that attachment to his interest, that heart to do his work, and affection to your person and family, that are necessary to make him diligent, careful, and honest: his duty becomes a burden, he looks upon his master as a cheat, and either thinks of nothing, but wearing out his time with a heartless eye-service, or is tempted to believe that he has a right to indemnify himself by pilfering and dishonesty. Therefore it is the interest, as well as the duty, of masters, to be ingenuous, when they speak of the nature of the work they require, and definite in the terms they propose, promising nothing but what they design to perform. And as there is nothing that can less admit of disputes than money, it might, perhaps, in general, be prudent, both for the master and servant, to specify a certain sum in full of wages, perquisites, and, in fine, of every thing the servant has to expect; this would prevent all discontent and

rapaciousness, and preclude every cause of complaint.

And further, as you should be explicit and candid in the terms of the contract, so you should conscientiously perform them, and honestly pay the promised wages. Some become servants, in order to learn some business or trade; here it is the duty of the master diligently and fully to instruct the servant in all that pertains to the business proposed; assisting him with his best advice, directing him by the experience that himself has gained; reserving no secret that is necessary or useful to that occupation; and, in a word, doing every thing in his power to send him out into the world, well qualified to earn his bread by his business, and to be useful to society. Negligence, in this respect, is extremely base and criminal; because it is an injury and injustice, whose fatal effects the sufferer may feel through life; which may expose him to many mortifications and much loss, and may keep him in poverty and distress to the end of his days. If, therefore, you would act with the humanity of men, with the integrity and honour of good members of society, or with the justice and charity of christians, let nothing hinder you from instructing your servants in



every thing which pertains to the business, which ye have undertaken to teach them.

When they serve you for wages, remember that their hire is the price of things that are very precious to them; I mean their time, their liberty, their strength, and their health; and, consequently, to defraud them of it, must be the blackest iniquity, and cannot fail to awaken the vengeance of the just Judge of all the earth. For, excepting the poor and miserable, there is no class of men, which God hath so peculiarly taken under his immediate protection, or declared so frequently and peremptorily, that he will see justice done to them, as hired servants. 'I will be a swift witness,' says he, 'against those who oppress the hireling in his wages. Behold,' says St. James, 'the hire of the labourers, that is kept back of you by fraud, crieth, and the cries of them which have laboured, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.' And the commandment, 'thou shalt not oppress an hired servant,' is as plain and peremptory as, 'thou shalt not steal;' consequently, all schemes to defraud them of their promised reward, however plausible they may appear, and however well they may succeed by superiour

interest upon earth, are highly criminal in the sight of God, will lie heavy upon your consciences in your last moments, and rise up against you in judgment.

As it is highly iniquitous to defraud them of their promised reward, so it is unjust and cruel to detain it from them, for any long time after it is earned ; for they rarely have any other resources to supply their wants ; in such a selfish and diffident world, they must pay dear for what they cannot pay immediately, and, sometimes, the comfortable subsistence of a numerous and helpless family depends upon your punctually answering the just demand. ‘ At his day,’ says the Almighty, ‘ thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it, lest he cry against the Lord, and it be a sin unto thee.’ ‘ Defraud not the poor of his living,’ saith the wise son of Sirach, ‘ and make not the needy eyes to wait long.’ In truth, you can have no creditor who has a juster title to his money, none that deserves the preference to a diligent and honest servant, and few that, for the most part, are less able to bear with delays in payment.

Further, it is the duty of masters, to use their servants with kindness and humanity.

This they have a title to as men, and a right to expect as christians ; and indeed, it is no more than a reasonable return, to those who are spending their time, and exhausting their strength in your service. Your commands ought to be reasonable, delivered with mildness, and proportioned to their strength. For when your commands are unreasonable, and beyond their power to perform, obedience is without heart, negligence without shame, and reproof without effect ; and because you require more than they are able to perform, they are apt to do less than they otherwise might do. Indeed, nothing is more discouraging to a diligent and faithful servant, than to find all that he can do will not satisfy his master ; the despair of pleasing abates his endeavours, at length he becomes indifferent, whether he be approved of or not. And as your commands must be reasonable, so your reproofs should be well timed, void of passion, and given with a certain air of concern for the servant's happiness, as well as your own interest. He who is always carping with his servants, hardens them against reproof, and makes himself unhappy and contemptible ; the frequency of his reproofs destroys their effect ; they soon come to be considered as things of course, are heard



with disregard, forgotten as soon as heard, or laughed at when he is gone.

Some masters seem to think that nothing can be done without a mighty bustle and noise ; that there is something great in flashes of anger, and something striking in volleys of oaths. Some there may be so weak as to imagine, that they command respect, and support their authority, when they make the house ring about them, see their servants shun their presence, and put all around them into hurry and confusion ; but the respect they procure, is much of the same kind with that we shew to a mad man, or a brute in his fury ; I mean, we humour the one, and keep out of the way of the other. And, as these hurricanes of passion betray a weakness of mind, that must lessen them in the esteem of their servants, so they proportionably diminish their authority ; they are first feared, then despised, and at last ridiculed and insulted.

Whereas the man who never reproveth without cause, and then delivers his mind with calmness, gravity, and resolution ; whose words are few, sedate, and significant, and carry in them something of the kindness of the friend, as well as the authority of the master, seldom fails to rivet his reproofs deep in

the heart, commonly produces amendment, gains esteem, and commands obedience. The affections of servants may be won sometimes by a little condescension, sometimes by obliging expressions, and almost always by shewing a just regard to their interest and happiness; such as giving them friendly advice in difficulties, treating them with care and tenderness in the time of sickness, and generously sympathizing with them in their several afflictions.

These are things that will not cost the master much, yet they will procure for him the pleasing reflection, that he does to others, as he would wish to be done to himself; they will obtain the approbation of his Master who is in heaven, and raise in the breasts of his servants an attachment to his interest, an affection to his person, a submission to his will, and diligence and fidelity in his service, more generous in their nature, and more sincere and constant, than the greatest exertion of his authority will ever obtain. And when a servant loves and esteems his master, there are few that will go greater lengths for their friends, than the servant will do for him; few whose friendship will be more active, lasting, and sincere. Several instances might be pro-

duced, where a servant has done more, and 'stuck closer than a brother,' and adhered to his master in spite of danger, and against his own interest, when the frowns of adversity made his other friends fall off. Though you should never need their friendship, yet there is a certain pleasure in possessing their affection; and no man can tell what changes of fortune may lie between him and the grave, and whose assistance he may need before he leaves the world.

But besides the duties I have already mentioned, if you would act with the humility and charity of christians, or the sound policy of prudent masters, you must avoid all contemptuous and slighting expressions to your servants, for they can never answer any good end; they cut to the quick, sink deep into the memory, and raise a resentment that is keen and long-lived; they are too severe trials for the patience of your servants, and bid very fair to make them lose, at once, all sense of duty, all considerations of interest, and all regard to your authority, and prompt them to treat you in your own way, and answer with a freedom and insolence, that, however justly you may deserve, you will not easily digest; and though they should prudently restrain



their tongues for the present, yet they will hardly forgive, and never forget, the affront. It may chance to meet you where you least expect it, and will effectually lessen their affection to your person, their concern for your interest, and their diligence and fidelity in your business.

Besides, it is cruel to make them feel their dependent condition so severely ; it is unmanly to insult your inferiours, uncharitable to treat men with contempt, who are made in the same divine image, serve the same Lord Jesus Christ, and are heirs of the same promises with yourselves ; and it is foolish and unnatural to despise members of the same political body, as necessary, and as useful in their stations, as those of the highest rank ; for ‘ the head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee ;’ the master can no more be happy without the servant’s labour, than the servant subsist without the master’s wages ; they are mutually dependent, and consequently the servant should not envy the master’s superiority, nor the master insult the servant’s meaner condition, but both study to please God, and promote one another’s happiness. ‘ Whereas,’ says the son of Sirach, ‘ thy servant worketh truly, entreat him not evil, nor the hireling

that bestoweth himself for thee; let thy soul love a good servant, and defraud him not of his wages.'

Neither is it prudent to encourage servants to entertain you with the slanderous tales of the neighbourhood, and the private concerns of the families around you. For by this, you will train them up to lying and slander, and will be partakers of their guilt; tale-bearing will grow into a habit upon them, and in the end be exercised against yourselves. If you hear their ill-natured tales, they will raise unworthy and uncharitable suspicions in your minds; if you believe them, they will lead you into rash judgment, and unjust actions; if you relate them, they will involve you in trouble and contention with your neighbours; and make you forfeit the favour of your God, by disobeying his solemn commandment, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' I know not how a master can appear in a more contemptible light, than when he is listening to the slanders his servant has collected in the neighbourhood, or invented to gratify his malicious curiosity. He betrays such a meanness in the method of obtaining his information, such a malice of heart in delighting to hear, and such a pernicious disposition, if

he intend to propagate the ill-natured reports, and, let me add too, such a want of prudence, in encouraging a trade that is carried on at his own expense ;—for servants generally purchase the secrets of their neighbour's families with the exchange of those of their own ;—that he seems to be at once void of sense, honour, and conscience, and as little acquainted with the duties of the social virtues, as he is with the obligations of christian charity. In a word, such a foolish conduct is unjust to your neighbours, cruel to your servants, and will prove pernicious to yourselves in this world, and that which is to come.

Lastly. It is, above all, the duty of masters to instruct their servants in the principles, and exhort them to the practice of the precepts, of the gospel. Every man, surely, ought to have the supreme authority in his family, offer its sacrifices of praise and prayer, and instruct its members in the knowledge and will of God. For how can we more effectually promote God's glory, than by inspiring all those upon whom we have any influence, with the knowledge of his attributes, with a reverence of his laws, and a sense of his authority and holiness ; than by improving the under-



standings, renewing the minds, and reforming the lives, of our dependents, and teaching all who are under our inspection and authority, 'to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously in this present world?' If we believe with the apostle, that 'God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,' we must also conclude, that we are co-operating with his will, when we are endeavouring to increase the religious knowledge, and to promote the salvation, of those around us. And that this is acceptable to him, we are very certain, because he has declared, that 'they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever,' and commended Abraham for his attention to the duty before us—'I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment.' If, therefore, you would be grateful to God for raising you to the rank of masters, if you have any zeal to promote his glory and honour, or any desire to receive his approbation in the day of judgment, you will endeavour to improve the religious knowledge and moral conduct of those, whom the providence of heaven shall commit to your care.

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 HYMN.

OF justice and of grace I sing,  
 And pay to God my vows ;  
 Thy grace and justice, heavenly King,  
 Teach me to rule my house.

Now to my tent, O God, repair,  
 And make thy servant wise ;  
 I'll suffer nothing near me there,  
 That shall offend thine eyes.

The pure, the faithful, and the just,  
 My favour shall enjoy ;  
 These are the friends that I will trust,  
 The servants I'll employ.

The wretch that deals in sly deceit,  
 I'll not endure a night ;  
 The liar's tongue I ever hate,  
 And banish from my sight.

I'll purge my family around,  
 And make the wicked flee ;  
 So shall my house be ever found  
 A dwelling fit for thee.

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 PRAYER.

O THOU God of equity and benevolence !  
 Grant me, I beseech thee, a clear knowledge  
 of my duties, and a strong inclination to per-  
 form them. Teach me to rule my house with  
 wisdom, moderation, and gentleness. May I  
 never manifest nor feel a ferocious and vindic-  
 tive temper, but act continually under the in-  
 fluence of the mild and generous spirit of the

gospel. Help me to remember, that thou, my master in heaven, wilt deal with rigour or mercy in regard to me, according as I shall conduct myself toward those, whom thou hast subjected to my authority, or employed in my service. May I order my behaviour so prudently, that they shall love my person, reverence my power, and cheerfully obey my commands. Incline me ever to show them justice, humanity, and candour. Give me the discretion to direct, and the vigilance to inspect their labours. May I be just and reasonable in my expectations concerning them. Make me as willing to encourage them when they do well, as to reprove their errors. Never permit me to abuse them or myself with hasty or violent language. Suffer me neither to despise their persons, nor to defraud them of their hire. That which is altogether equitable may I follow. Make me even more than righteous: may I be good. In imitation of thy sun which shines, and of thy mercy which droppeth down from heaven on all parts of creation, may I attend to the claims of all my inferiours and dependents. Succeed my endeavours to teach them modesty, contentment, diligence, and frugality. May I cherish, assist, and reward their virtuous dispositions, and



obliging carriage. Above all, may I commend them frequently, as I now humbly do, to thy compassion and grace, beseeching thee to renew their hearts, and sanctify them by thy truth in Jesus Christ, my Lord.... Amen.

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## DISCOURSE IX.

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### ON THE DUTIES OF INFERIOURS.

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COLOSSIANS iii. 22.

*Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh ; not with eye-service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God.*

THESE words lead us to discourse upon the duties of a station, that has no small influence on the peace and happiness of private families, and the interest and tranquillity of society in general ; a station that is very considerable for the great number of those who fill it, and that very much needs direction, because of the varieties of its duties, and multitude of

its temptations, the greatness of its trust, and a certain licentiousness that has indeed infected all ranks, but must be peculiarly pernicious in that of servants. "As all souls are mine," is the declaration of God in Scripture, so the attention and endeavors of the ministers of the Gospel should extend to every station of life, that "every member of the Church, in his vocation and ministry," may freely serve God, and keep his commandments."

I shall, therefore, in this discourse, lay before you some of the principal duties incumbent upon servants; and then conclude with my earnest prayers, that God may so dispose their hearts to fulfil them, that they may receive his approving sentence at the end of this mortal life.

First then, it is required of servants, that they be strictly honest. "Thou shalt not steal," is directed to all stations of life; and "thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbor's," extends to every part of the property of other men; and consequently dishonesty in any condition of life, is base, shameful, and wicked: but it must be doubly so, when it is committed by those who put confidence in our honesty; when it is attended with a breach of trust, and aggravated with the basest

and blackest ingratitude ; and thus it must always be in all dishonest servants. There the crime of theft is carried to its highest pitch of wickedness ; for they rob the person who puts his goods into their hands with a design to preserve them ; they injure the man whose interest they are bound to promote ; they eat his bread, and receive his wages, and secretly contrive his ruin.

A man has a thousand ways to secure his property from strangers, but if those of his own house prove dishonest, he must be undone, because it is next to impossible to prevent their villainy. The midnight thief that breaks into a house is not half so guilty ; the robber that meets me on the high way takes only what I may have about me ; he lies under no particular obligations, he betrays no trust, I know how much I lose, and may find means to repair it by more diligence, or greater frugality ; but the dishonest servant betrays me, where I thought myself secure, and under the profession of an attachment to my interest, does me the greatest injury.

Next to these, diligence and application are duties incumbent upon servants. Most of the servants in the Apostle's days, were such as had been taken in war, such as had been



reduced to slavery by misfortunes, or such as, by an hard fate indeed, became slaves by being born of parents, who, as the Apostle expresses it, were "under the yoke." Negligence, one would think, might have been, in some degree excusable in persons, who, without their own consent, had lost their freedom, had little prospect of ever recovering it, could not change their masters when they were ill used, and had no reward for their labour, but a scanty subsistence.

Yet the Apostle insists upon the necessity of diligently performing their business "for conscience sake." How much more must it be incumbent on servants in our days, to do their duty with diligence, who freely, and out of choice, enter into a kind of covenant, to work for certain wages, have it in their power to alter their circumstances, if they think them grievous, and can demand the price of their labour when their time is out? Look upon it in what light you please, sloth and idleness in this respect are just as fraudulent and criminal, as it would be in a person to sell a commodity at a certain price, and upon the delivery, withhold a great part of it, or spoil the whole.

And besides the injustice of it, with respect to your masters, besides the fatal consequences with which it will be attended in a future existence, it will prove very prejudicial to your present interest. You will be little esteemed in the families into which you may go, your residence in them will not be long ; and when your character comes to be known, you will have no chance to have the best masters, the highest wages, the most constant employment, the kindest treatment, or the most honourable work ; all these ye must resign to those who deserve them better, to those who are " diligent in business ;" and conscientiously do their duty. You will contract an habit of negligence and idleness, and a certain aversion to labour and industry, that may very probably make you take some foolish or desperate course, or at least will keep you poor and low during all your lives. For, as Solomon observes, " slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and the idle soul shall suffer hunger."

Besides these, servants ought to be tractable and patient. Obstinacy and pride are always contemptible, and commonly ruinous in every rank of life ; but they are doubly so in a dependent condition, and peculiarly ridiculous in those, whom the Providence of God

has placed in a low station. A servant can hardly act in a manner more inconsistent with his duty, interest, and condition, than when he presumes to direct his master ; ventures to do things his own way, in opposition to his master's will, and is peevish and refractory when his counsel is not followed. It may be right upon certain occasions to offer his best advice ; but to be perverse because it is not followed, is foolish and insolent, because his master must be supposed to know his own affairs best ; because his interest is most at stake, and because it is his province to direct, and that of the servant to obey.

They whose lot it is to serve others, must resolve to make allowances for their humours, to put up with some things that may seem very mortifying, and to bear reproofs with patience. If you have done wrong, it is reasonable that you should be reprov'd. The loser may at least have leave to complain, and though anger in such cases is seldom useful, or wise, in the master, yet it is natural, and may sometimes carry a good-natured and prudent man beyond the strict bounds of discretion, and may make him use expressions that may be mortifying and harsh ; in such circumstances you should remember, that " a soft answer



turneth away wrath"—that the ingenuous acknowledgment of a fault, and sincere professions of resolution to amend it, seldom fail to appease anger : whereas an attempt to vindicate what is wrong, highly aggravates the offence ; frivolous excuses offered in order to lessen your fault, only betray an insensibility of it ; and insolent answers, when you have done amiss, might provoke even one of a mild temper, and are apt to make a man who is already angry, lose all patience. ‘Exhort servants,’ says St. Paul, ‘to be obedient to their masters, and to please them well in all things ; not answering again, nor purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.’

Even when you think yourselves unjustly blamed, your answers should be mild and submissive ; ye should choose the happiest season for your vindication, and have a little patience till the fit of passion be subsided. For whilst the violence of passion continues, you may as well persuade the storm to be calm, as to attempt to make an angry man listen to what you have to offer in your vindication, to think with calmness, or judge with equity. In such cases, silence is the greatest prudence, and a

little patience, the nearest and surest way to peace.

It is here that you can shew yourselves superiour to your masters ; for if you can command your tempers, speak with discretion, and act with prudence, when they suffer themselves to be transported into rage and fury, you demonstrate that you have more of the reason and sedateness of men, and the spirit and temper of christians, than they ; and consequently, that it is not their merit, but the providence of God that has raised them to a superiour rank in life ; for, says Solomon, ‘greater is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that ruleth a city.’ Above all, remember the direction of St. Paul, ‘Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.’ In a word, if you would act like christians, you must be subject for conscience sake ; your obedience must proceed from a religious principle, and you ought not so much to consider, whether or not your master may in himself deserve your submission, whether or not your want of submission is like to affect your present interest, or whether or not you may be arrogant without punishment ; but chiefly, that God has commanded you to be obedient,

that submission is your duty, and that it is your interest to do service with good will, 'as unto the Lord, and not unto man; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.'

Lastly, servants ought to be no tale-bearers nor act as spies in their master's family; for this, like dishonesty, is a breach of trust, may be attended with very bad consequences to the interest and happiness of the master, and seldom fails to bring vexation and disgrace upon the servant himself. Indeed, in a well regulated family, he will not hear, nor see, any thing, that the master needs to be ashamed, or afraid of, though it be published to the world; yet in all families, there are certain domestic concerns, that the world has no business with; certain private transactions, that as they pertain only to that small society, so they should not be known any where else; and certain little regulations and peculiarities in its economy, which, though they may not only be innocent, but prudent, useful, and necessary, yet ought not to be exposed to the malicious interpretations, and ill-natured glosses, of a censorious world.



A man's own house ought to be his sanctuary, to which he may retire, and be safe from the sharp eye of malice, and the poisonous sting of the tale-bearer's tongue. It is there that he opens his heart; and consequently, it is there that a tale-bearer is most dangerous and criminal; most dangerous, because his being in the family gives him an opportunity to hear, and see, most of his master's transactions, and private conduct, and that connection gives a certain probability to his reports, and gains them belief in the world; and most criminal, because he betrays the trust reposed in him, and injures the man to whom it is his duty to be faithful. Servants, as being members of a family, are obliged, by all the ties of gratitude and duty, to promote its interest, and seek its peace; and nothing is more likely to be ruinous to both these, than to publish its private concerns, and whisper in the neighbourhood its real or supposed secrets. Indeed, much more of its happiness depends on the tongues of servants, than they seem to be aware of; a distant hint may be improved to its disadvantage, when dropped by a servant; and how often do tale-bearing servants set families at variance within themselves, and sow discord between them and their neigh-

hours? But ‘blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God ;’ but cursed are they that foster contention, for they are the emissaries of the devil.

As you must not publish the private concerns of the families in which you reside, neither should you pry into those of your neighbours, nor pump their servants in order to discover them ; for by doing these things, you tempt you neighbours to iniquity, you may involve yourselves in trouble, and certainly act in a way inconsistent with christian charity.

To conclude ; honesty in your conduct—carefulness with respect to such things as are committed to your charge—diligence in your work—patience in your temper—and prudence in the government of your tongues are the principal duties of your station. And these duties you should seriously, and sincerely, endeavour to discharge, if you would wish to obtain the good opinion of the world ; if you desire that the wages you receive should prosper in your hands ; if you would have the approbation of your own hearts, and the comforts of a good conscience ; if you would look back upon this existence with pleasure, when you stand upon the brink of eternity, or hope to be received at the awful tribunal of the

Supreme Judge of all the earth, with 'Well done, good and faithful servants.' Which may God, of his infinite mercy, grant to all that hear me, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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### HYMN.

Why should I deprive my neighbour  
Of his goods against his will?  
Hands were made for honest labour,  
Not to plunder, nor to steal.

'Tis a foolish self-deceiving  
By such tricks to hope for gain;  
All that's ever got by thieving  
Turns to sorrow, shame, and pain.

Oft we see a young beginner  
Practise little pilfering ways,  
Till grown up a harden'd sinner,  
Then the gallows ends his days.

Theft will not be always hidden,  
Though we fancy none espy;  
When we take a thing forbidden  
God beholds it with his eye.

Guard my heart, O God of heaven,  
Lest I covet what's not mine:  
Lest I steal what is not given,  
Guard my heart and hands from sin.



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PRAYER.

Almighty and most merciful God ! I adore thee as a being of perfect wisdom and unchangeable goodness. The high and the low, the rich and the poor were created by thee, and thou art no respecter of persons. I desire to be thankful that, though thou hast assigned me a humble station in life, thou hast yet given me time and inclination to inquire after thee my maker, and what thou wilt have me to do. I beseech thee, give me grace to know and do thy will. Make me faithful in my calling. Help me to obey and please those whom I serve in all things, which are not forbidden by thy holy commandments and the laws of the land. May I acknowledge their authority, and respect their persons. Save me from falling into artful and deceitful practices. May I be sincere and without offence, not rendering an eye-service, but doing my duty willingly and thoroughly, in singleness of heart, fearing thee. May I remember that it is thy will, and the commandment of Jesus Christ, that I should behave myself with all

due subjection to my superiours. May I think soberly of myself, as I ought to think. In imitation of my holy Master, who made himself of no reputation, but took on him the form of a servant, may I humble myself, and be obedient. Make me careful of the property and reputation of the family in which I live. May I consider their interest as my own. Suffer me neither to mispend my time, nor waste their substance. Preserve me from all idle and loitering habits. Whatever of duty my hand findeth to do, may I do it with my might. Dispose me to be contented and happy, and never let me think of bettering my condition by unjust means. Grant me to realize, that thine eye is ever upon me; and that thou wilt hereafter reward my fidelity and virtue with everlasting life through Jesus Christ my Lord....*Amen.*

## REASONS FOR BELIEVING THE TRUTH OF DIVINE REVELATION.

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LUKE xi. 13.

*If ye then being evil know to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

IT is the wish of a child to have the will of its parent, not merely intimated, but explicitly declared. It is also the wish of God's human offspring to have his requisitions concerning them clearly revealed. Now human parents, notwithstanding they are often governed by peevishness and passion, are, for the most part, happy to gratify the desires of their children. So too does the *Father of lights* rejoice to dispel the clouds of ignorance, which naturally overshadow the mind of man. This blessing he bestowed on our bewildered race, when *the heavens were opened unto JESUS OF NAZARETH, and the spirit of God descended like a dove, and lighted upon him.* This



most precious of heavenly gifts was conferred on men, where *there appeared unto the* **PRIMITIVE APOSTLES** *cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.* From this moment of mercy, the religion, which is now found in the Bible, outweighed all the religions, which were ever laid in the balance of human reason. Henceforth mankind were instructed in a system of the most rational theology, the most enlarged benevolence, and the purest morality, which was ever conceived; whilst it no longer wanted, what was wanting to the lessons of *Plato* and *Anacharsis*, of *Tully* and *Confucius*, **THE SANCTION OF DIVINE AUTHORITY.**

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**EZEKIEL xviii. 31, 32.**

*Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.*

To frail and offending man, how dreadful the idea of an omnipresent being, who has no goodness; of an omnipotent being, who is destitute of mercy! Perverse philosophers

and dreaming fanaticks have sometimes painted the object of our worship in these frightful colours. He, who reads the scriptures, and reflects on what he reads, rejoices, that such a God is not the God of the bible. That ancient and venerable book describes the Deity as a being, it is true, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, and whom the armies of the universe cannot resist ; who cannot vary from the perfections of truth, rectitude, and purity ; who can never behold evil with complacency, nor virtue with disapprobation ; and a settled law of whose government it is, to reward and glorify righteousness, and to punish and disgrace the obstinate sinner. At the same time, we are instructed from the same pages of heavenly wisdom to consider the righteous governour of the world, as the father and friend of his human offspring ; who is not willing that they should perish ; who delights not in their wickedness and misery, but in their uprightness and felicity ; who accepts their sincere penitence and confirmed reformation in place of immaculate innocence ; who, when he first formed fallible man out of the dust of the ground, proposed to be very good to this creature of his power ; whose benevolence is, in fact, the principle of all his works ;

whose very nature is love ; who is equally glorious for his benignity, as for his wisdom ; and no less amiable for the multitude of his tender mercies, than fearful for the displays of almighty and universal energy. Such is the Jew's and the christian's God. So consistent, so lovely, and so perfect a character of the Supreme Being never existed in the mind of any uninspired man. Compare, on this point, all the theology of all the pagans with the declarations of scripture, and the palpable contrast affords palpable proof, that PROPHECY CAME NOT IN OLD TIME BY THE WILL OF MAN ; BUT HOLY MEN OF GOD SPAKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

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LUKE xix. 40.

*And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*

THIS is to be understood as a proverbial kind of expression, signifying the certainty of Christ's Messiahship. The skeptical pharisees, desirous of damping the joy, and quenching the zeal, of those pious Jews, who glorified God for *visiting and redeeming his*



people, requested Jesus to rebuke his extravagant disciples, and teach them moderation. "By no means," he replies. "Their rejoicing is in the highest degree reasonable and decorous. This is the most joyous day ever known in Judea. It is the happy era, of which your prophets have prophesied, and your poets sung. In their predictions, you boast a future Prince of peace, and exult in the expected privileges of his reign. That Prince hath come, and his reign is commenced. His works and triumphs incontestibly prove it. *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk ; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.* These blessings your fathers saw in vision only ; but you see them literally : it was theirs to enjoy them in mere prospect ; it is yours to taste and realize them :—they could say, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, for thy king COMETH* ; but far more blessed are your eyes, which behold this king ALREADY COME, actually dispensing the light of his doctrine and the honours of his salvation. Amidst these brilliant proofs of the Messiah's advent, it is evidence of your stupidity to deny his divine mission, and of your

envy and malice to attempt repressing the rapture of his followers. For, if his entrance into your city, on this remarkable occasion, should excite no acclamations of the people, inanimate nature would accuse them of insensibility and ingratitude, and the very *stones* in the street become the organs of his praise."

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MATTHEW V. 5.

*Blessed are the meek ; for they shall inherit the earth.*

LONG had the heathen philosophers perplexed themselves and their scholars, in discussing the subject of the "chief good." Their opinions concerning it were contradictory and endless. One sought it in riches, another in mirth, a third in revenge, a fourth in women, a fifth in conquest, a sixth in liberty, and a seventh in fame. The sage of Nazareth, untutored by Socrates, and unlettered in the lore of Aristotle, exposed the grossness of their errors, and by the radiance of his heavenly wisdom dispelled the clouds and darkness, which enveloped their reasonings. He taught his disciples to look for the sovereign happiness, not in the splendour of a court, but in the humble cottage of content-

ment ; not in the dissipations of the gay, but among the pupils of adversity ; not at the tables of the luxurious, but in the life of him who *eats of wisdom's bread, and drinks of the wine which she has mingled* ; not in the indulgence of malevolent, but in that of the pacifick dispositions ; not, in short, in the emoluments, distinctions, and pleasures of sensual and selfish man, but in patience, humility, and moderation ; in the acquisition of that moral purity and that unfeigned benevolence, which constitute the felicity of God.

This doctrine, so astonishing and incredible in the eye of a corrupt and stupid world, carries proof of its divinity and truth to the heart of reflection. How much happier, for example, are the MEEK believers in revelation, than proud infidels who condemn what they have never examined, and profane what they do not understand ! How much happier the MEEK disciples of Christ who calmly endure affliction, than froward fatalists who gall themselves with its yoke ! How much happier the MEEK who are slow to anger and candid in construction, than those waspish spirits who make a man *an offender for a word* ; the



MEEK who forgive an injury, than the wrathful duellist, who cleanses his honour in the blood of a companion ; the MEEK who quietly enjoy, than the passionate who eagerly contend ; the MEEK who by sweetness of temper and gentleness of manners are always multiplying friends, than the petulant and morose who are always losing them ; the MEEK who prepare for trouble in the present world, which they consider as a passage to a better, than the impetuous and violent sons of ambition, who are continually jostled and bruised in a crowd of rivals, and stung by disappointments, without a ray of consolation or of hope from the light of the gospel !

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LUKE X. 30—37.

*And Jesus answering, said, A certain man, &c. &c.*

IT is to no purpose, that we are sometimes asked, Have there been fewer wars among nations, or feuds between individuals since, than there were before, the introduction of christianity ? The question is not, What is the conduct of nominal christians ? But, What is the genuine spirit of the religion they profess ? Every one knows, that it is a spirit of TOLERATION, PEACE, and CHARITY. And

every one acknowledges that, were this spirit universally imbibed, *nation would no longer lift up sword against nation*, nor *Jews abominate Samaritans*, nor papists protestants, nor these dissenters. In the grand article of UNIVERSAL PHILANTHROPY, the gospel infinitely exceeds all the systems of morality that ever appeared in the world. It evidently designs to slay the enmity subsisting between different peoples, and kindreds, and sects ; to unite them into one family under a common head ; and to inspire them with a reciprocal and active BENEVOLENCE.

It is our joy to believe, that this divine purpose of our religion is by no means defeated. If the gospel has not ended, it has greatly mitigated, the horrors of war ; and calmed, if not quelled, the rage of private malice, envy, and revenge. It has enlightened and quickened the moral sense of mankind ; refined the publick opinion ; founded beneficent institutions ; induced gentle manners ; and made the morals of men as much better, as their lights are stronger, than were those of the ancients. *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day,\* which the Lord hath made ; we will rejoice*

\* Written Dec. 25, 1802.

*and be glad in it. Glory to God in the highest ; on earth PEACE ; GOOD WILL to men ! For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and he is justly called—The Prince of PEACE.*

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MATTHEW, iv. 11.

*Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him.*

WHETHER the temptation of Jesus Christ, as recorded by the evangelists, was a real transaction, or, which is probably the case, a Jewish allegory, is a question wholly unconnected with our present object. It is asserted on divine authority, and therefore unquestionably true, that the life of Christ was a scene of suffering and of temptation. It is also equally manifest, that he *learned obedience by the things which he suffered*, and though *tempted in all points like as we are, yet he was without sin*. His sufferings served but to confirm and display his virtue, and all his conflicts were crowned with victory. He had the appetites and feelings of man. He was sensible of hunger and thirst after fasting, of cold when naked, of fatigue on journies, and of pain when pierced and wounded. But the



preternatural power, which he exerted to feed the thousands who followed him, and to restore soundness and vigour to the deformed and sick, was never employed for his own comfort. He had the passions of man. He was occasionally angry ; but his anger was tempered with compassion, and never degenerated into peevishness, nor bordered on malice or revenge. He was alive to pleasure, but he *pleased not himself* ; and to joy, but he sought that *which was set before him* in the heavenly state. He was not insensible to calumny and reproach. But though reviled for inadequate pretensions to the Messiah's dignity, he calmly submitted to the contempt of scoffers, instead of aiming at such an unlimited exercise of miraculous gift, as would have compelled the conviction and allegiance of the world. Finally, it was natural for him to prefer riches to poverty, fame to ignominy, and power to dependence. Yet the fact was, he had neither wealth nor wealthy connexions, notwithstanding he was able to draw money from the fishes of the sea for the payment of tribute. He aspired after no glory, but that, which was designed him by the Father of the universe *before the world was*. He was in quest of a

kingdom ; but his *kingdom was not of this world* : though offered a crown, he refused to accept it. Concerning a character thus single, and so incongenial with the general spirit and views of mankind, the opinion of every candid judge will be that, which was long since formed by a noble Roman, **TRULY THIS MAN WAS THE SON OF GOD.**

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1 COR. xv. 53.

*This mortal must put on immortality.*

THIS, to be sure, is a very extraordinary proposition, and one which severely exercises the mind of every rational believer. To be told, that the body of man, which is sustained by food, grows to perfection, decays, dies, and corrupts like that of other animals, will hereafter be resuscitated and made a glorious and incorruptible body, is a doctrine so contrarious to present observation, that the deist immediately rejects it. But the marks of authenticity and truth, which it bears, convict him of extreme temerity. At least it merits a rigorous examination. Of all the proofs, and there are several, which are brought to its support, the weightiest and brightest is the resurrection of Christ. This argument,

which is managed with great force in the context, lies in a small compass, and is easily apprehended. It is principally contained between the twelfth and twentieth verses, and the sum of it is this. If there shall be no resurrection of the virtuous, whence the resurrection of Jesus Christ? If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, your faith in the gospel is vain. If your faith in the gospel is vain, we, apostles, are of all men the greatest liars, and of all liars the greatest fools. For what do we gain by our false testimony and and absurd doctrine? Mockings, scourgings, bonds, and imprisonment! In defence of this system of folly and fanaticism, our lives are every moment in jeopardy; and we have too many reasons to believe, that a firm adherence to our cause, and on this we are determined, will finally subject us to the shame, agonies, and death of our master. No, christians. Our cruel sufferings and still more horrid expectations prove the truth of our *testimony*, which proves the truth of the *gospel*, which involves the reality of *Christ's resurrection*, which proves the possibility and certainty of *yours*, and is the deep and immoveable foundation of your heavenly hopes.



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HEB. iv. 9.*There remaineth—a rest to the people of God.*

To the Jew, tired of his travels in Arabian deserts and of wars with savage idolaters, a prospect of repose in the land of Canaan was extremely grateful. To the christian, wearied with the toils and sick of the amusements and flatteries of the week, how welcome the return of a day, which is graced with the name of his Lord ! Yet neither of these rests is permanent or satisfactory. The man of faith and righteousness aspires to an happier country, than was ever found on the banks of Jordan, and after a more quiet and glorious sabbath, than christendom affords. And, blessed be God, he does not seek in vain. For him there is in reversion a state, in which there will be no labour but that of love, and no business but that of praise ; a day succeeded by no night ; an eternal round of pleasures unmix- ed with pain ; an age of peace, virtue, and consolations ; where ignorance will give place to knowledge, the slumbers of sloth to perpetual wakefulness and activity, the pangs of remorse to the approbation of angels, the malice of enemies to the supports of friendship, and

the distressful apprehensions of poverty and death, to the possession of an imperishable inheritance and an interminable life.

The certainty of such a state is manifest from various appearances in the natural world, from ancient opinion, the longing desires of every bosom, the present inscrutable government of an impartial Deity, and especially from his express revelations concerning it by Jesus Christ, WHEREOF HE HATH GIVEN ASSURANCE UNTO ALL MEN, IN THAT HE HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.

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I. KINGS, xix. 4.

*And he requested for himself that he might die ; and said, It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life.*

Who does not mourn the frailty of human nature, and the occasional weakness of the strongest faith ! Elijah, that bold and faithful prophet of the Most High ; Elijah, who was fed by the ravens of the desert, who could miraculously replenish the barrel of meal, and the cruse of oil for the widow of *Zarephath*, and wrest from the hands of death her beloved child ; Elijah, who, defying the power of an idolatrous monarch, rebuked him

to his face, and, in the presence of his courtiers, slew four hundred and fifty of his prophets ; Elijah—is here flying, like a coward, from the face of an impotent woman, and peevishly wishing to die, on account of her threats !

This eminent servant of religion is not the only instance of inconsistency in good men, which the scriptures have recorded. Abraham, the friend of God, was once guilty of base prevarication. Moses, the pattern of meekness, once practised the most impious temerity. David, the most upright of princes, and the ornament of his age, was once guilty of adultery and murder. Hezekiah, in the general, remarkably pious and humble, was, in one instance, as remarkable for his pride and vanity. And the apostle Peter, who cheerfully submitted to crucifixion, for the sake of the gospel, was once the profane denier of his lord !

What is the inference from these facts. **THE SCRIPTURES ARE DIVINELY TRUE.** They exhibit a faithful picture of human life in the early ages of the world, and of the conduct of Providence towards good men. Had the sacred writers been actuated by a spirit of imposture, instead of publishing, they would



have concealed, the failings and crimes of themselves and their heroes. But they freely narrate their vices as well as virtues, and are contented to be *numbered*, through all succeeding ages, *among the transgressors* of mankind, rather than sacrifice a particle of the truth.

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I. KINGS, xxi. 20.

*And Ahab said to Elisha, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ?*

LIGHT is sweet, but not to a diseased eye ; and to a vitiated palate the pleasantest fruits have no flavour. As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovcr upon an obedient ear. But there are brutish beings in human shape, who are as insensible to instruction, as the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Attempt to rouse these stupid mortals from their guilty lethargy, and you educe at once the whole poison of their hatred. It is the pungency of truth to a depraved heart, which creates the enmity subsisting between a foolish child and a wise parent, between a disorderly citizen and a vigi-

lant magistrate, between a wretched rake and his faithful pastor, between, in short, the determined unbeliever, and that gospel which condemns his iniquities. A bad life is in fact the root of infidelity. Had the rites of christianity been those of paganism, or had its Author preached a Mahometan paradise, he and his apostles had never suffered the agonies of the cross. Because, however, they darted the lightning of reproof on the oppressive ruler and the hypocritical scribe, and rolled the thunder of almighty wrath upon a voluptuous world, they were hated and slain as the enemies of mankind. Let the skeptick, therefore, tremble on account of his moral condition, when he reads the character of his disbelief in the following lines. *He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproofed.*

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